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A LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

BY

LIONEL CURTIS

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A LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

In October 1916, I arrived in India with the object of making certain studies for submission to an informal organization of students known as the Round Table groups. My friends were expecting my return to England after the cold weather, but on November 13, I wrote to warn them that I should have to postpone my return and gave reasons for this change in my plans. Presently I learned that a copy of this letter had gone astray, by means of which I have no knowledge. As a quite erroneous version of its contents was current, I instantly published the letter. But none the less it was referred to in public speeches and in countless newspaper articles as proving a charge of conspiracy, and even of criminal conspiracy, between public officials, the Round Table group and myself. Conspiracy implies a concealment of facts. To all the pertinent facts the fullest publicity had been given by those against whom the charge was directed throughout the English-speaking world. Elsewhere a widespread knowledge of these facts would have rendered such charges harmless if made, and, indeed, impossible to make. That in India these published facts were so little known was not, I think, a matter for which anyone was to blame. The obvious remedy is to restate them now in the fullest details in one paper accessible to every Indian who cares to read it.

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There is, however, a further reason for adopting that course.

Suspicions have been roused which tend to obscure issues of vital importance to India. "Suspicions are to knowledge as bats to birds—they fly by darkness." The remedy for suspicions is the truth, and as the French say "to know all is to forgive all." I propose, therefore, as truthfully as a humanly fallible memory will allow me, to tell you the history of the Round Table and to detail the facts with regard to my letter; I will then ask you to consider those larger issues which, as I have said, are in some danger of being obscured by a controversy which I am sorry to have caused.

After the South African war ended with the Peace of Vereeniging in 1902, the Transvaal and Orange Free State were governed as Crown colonies on lines similar to those under which India is governed to-day. Several friends of whom I was one were officials employed under the Transvaal Government. We were Englishmen who had either fought in the war or had come to South Africa soon after it. A few years later Sir James Meston and Mr. Marris were borrowed from India to set the Civil Service in order, and this was how we came to know them.

In 1906, the British Government announced their intention of granting responsible Government to the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Most of us thought that this was the right thing to do; but we also thought that when it was done, the Governments of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, but lately Republics, would soon find themselves in conflict with those of the Cape Colony and Natal. No one who has seen a civil war wants to see it again, and we

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believed that the only remedy to be found was by putting all four colonies under one National Government, responsible to the people of South Africa as a whole.

Genesis of the Round Table.

At this juncture it appeared to some of us that good might be done by getting members of both races to work together on a problem which had not as yet been dragged into the ruts of racial politics. I therefore left the Government Service and set to work to collect groups in various parts of the country, known as Closer Union Societies, which included members of both races and of all parties. We then worked out in detail the case for South African Union and the materials for a new constitution, a task in which we received help from Mr. Marris. These documents were printed and submitted to the Closer Union Societies for criticism. They were then revised in the light of that criticism and finally published.

The experiment had one happy result in the better feeling engendered between a few members of two races, but lately at war with each other, who, for the first time, found themselves working together on a question of capital public importance. This better understanding between private individuals contributed to the realisation of a project which many of those who best knew the country had deemed to be impossible. Government officials, Dutch and English, were authorised by General Botha to join the Closer Union Societies, so that those of my friends who remained in the public service were able to take their part in these studies. Their help was invaluable, because no one understands the structure of Government or can

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help others to understand it so well, as those who are actually working the machine.

While this work was in progress, Responsible Government was introduced in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Elections were held, Boer majorities were returned, and Governments largely consisting of Boer generals, who had fought against us in the late war, came into power. We Englishmen thus found ourselves under the Government of a race which we had first fought and afterwards ruled. Perhaps we can realise better than most of our countrymen what it feels like to be ruled by a race other than one's own. Now we all knew that if the four colonies were united under one Government, that Government would also be in the hands of the Boers. The Union of South Africa meant that not only the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony but also the British communities of the Cape Colony and Natal would be governed by Boer Generals for a generation at least. And yet we faced that consequence, because we believed that we as Englishmen stood for the principle of self-government and that, even if we were in the minority, South Africa ought to manage her own affairs within the circle of the British Commonwealth. And so we argued to our fellow countrymen that we ought to help to establish a national Government in South Africa and obey it, even when its orders were contrary to our wishes and interests. This we felt it our duty to do because the British Parliament would scarcely have ratified so drastic a change had it been opposed by the united voice of the British minority in South Africa.

Still we were faced with one most difficult question. The danger of war with Germany was already in sight and we had to consider what attitude the future

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Government of South Africa would take if the storm burst. General Botha we trusted; but we knew that it was more than possible that a man like General Beyers, who as events have proved was in actual collusion with the Germans, might be in power if and when the Germans attacked us. We believed that a Prime Minister like Beyers would proclaim that South Africa was to stand aside and remain neutral in any great struggle with the German powers. Thus when the Imperial Government was calling upon us as British subjects to fight, the South African Government we had helped to establish would be calling upon us to stand aside, and in such an event which of the two were we called upon to obey? The South African Government, moreover, would be able to say that the Imperial Government did not represent the people of South Africa and could not, therefore, commit them to war.

Here was the key to the false position in which we were placed. The Imperial Government held office by virtue of the votes which we, as British subjects in England, cast with the rest of our fellow countrymen. We had a voice, however small, in making and unmaking the Governments which decided the issues of peace and war. As British subjects in a self-governing Dominion, we had no such voice, nor were we called upon to contribute taxes to the cost of defence. The greatest of all responsibilities, that of national life and death, no longer rested on us in South Africa. We were, thus, drawn to ask ourselves whether a system which excluded us from the heaviest of all responsibilities, was responsible Government in the true sense of the word.

Confronted by this dilemma at the very moment of attaining Dominion self-government, we thought it

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would be wise to ask people in the oldest and most experienced of all the Dominions what they thought of the matter. So, in 1909, Mr. Kerr and I went to Canada and persuaded Mr. Marris, who was then on leave, to accompany us.

A Political Mile-Stone.

I must here pause in this narrative to relate an episode which has some bearing on the present controversy. I remember discussing the Indian anarchist troubles with Mr. Marris, as we walked through a forest on the Pacific slopes, and his views so startled and arrested my attention as to make a lasting impression on my mind. Self-government, he urged, however far distant, was the only intelligible goal of British policy in India. It needed a guiding principle and no other was thinkable. A despotic Government would have tried to withhold education or at any rate such as had any bearing on political progress. The British Government, on the other hand, actually encouraged political studies, prescribing standard books on the working of representative institutions. Political unrest was the inevitable product of such education. In a country containing such varied elements as India, political unrest was bound in certain directions to develop into anarchy, which must, of course be suppressed, if only because disorder is the greatest impediment to progress towards self-government. But the existence of political unrest in India, so far from being a reason for pessimism, was the surest sign that the British, with all their manifest failings, had not shirked their primary duty of extending western education to India, and so preparing Indians to govern themselves.

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I have since looked back to this walk as one of the mile-stones in my own education. So far I had thought of self-government as a Western institution, which was and would always remain peculiar to the peoples of Europe, just as a Hindu thinks of Hinduism as a religion to which a man must be born. It was from that moment that I first began to think of "the Government of each by each, and of all by all" not merely as a principle of western life, but rather of all human life, as the goal to which all human societies must tend. It was from that moment that I began to think of the British Commonwealth as the greatest instrument ever devised for enabling that principle to be realised, not merely for the children of Europe but for all races and kindreds and peoples and tongues. And it is for that reason that I have ceased to speak of the British Empire and called the book in which I published my views, "The Commonwealth of Nations."

The Round Table Quarterly Review.

Let us now return to the thread of my narrative. We three spent four months in Canada, often following different routes and making a number of friends. I then returned to South Africa for the closing session of the Transvaal Legislative Council, of which I was a member, and there drafted a memorandum on the whole question. The result satisfied us that we were confronted by a problem too large and too difficult for a handful of friends in South Africa to solve for themselves. So in 1910 on the appointed day when the Union of South Africa came into being, I sailed for New Zealand. There I discussed the document with men connected with the Universities and in private

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business. It was finally decided that student groups should be formed at University centres to study the memorandum, which for that purpose, was printed with blank sheets opposite the text. We agreed that the groups should include men of all parties and Government officials, but not, unless in exceptional circumstances, journalists and politicians, for the reason that such men were committed to political programmes. Our object was to arrive at conclusions by which each man could regulate his own political conduct for himself. Each student was to note his criticism on the blank pages opposite the text. They were then to meet in their groups and discuss these criticisms with a view to framing joint reports, or, failing that, majority and minority reports or reports coupled with minutes of dissent. These collective and individual criticisms were to be sent to me, in the light of which I was to compile a comprehensive report on the whole Imperial Problem for submission to the groups, with a view to seeing whether any agreement could be reached. It was further decided to obtain the co-operation of similar groups in Canada and England and to start a quarterly journal, called the Round Table, which was to contain information on Imperial affairs and articles from the various countries included in the British Commonwealth, for the mutual information of the student groups. Its object was to promote a common interest and not to inculcate any definite doctrines. The constitution of at least one English group and the editing of the Magazine was entrusted to Mr. Kerr. The journal was to be published. Otherwise our studies were to be private, until they had yielded results which were worth publication. Obviously such studies could

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not be conducted in an atmosphere of newspaper criticism.

Five of such groups were established in New Zealand, and five more at University centres in Australia. In accordance with the expressed wish of these groups, I next proceeded to Canada, and there formed several groups in University towns. Thence I returned to England, where groups were subsequently formed at Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds and Birmingham as well as in London.

Early in 1911, the individual and collective criticism of the groups began to arrive. Before the close of the year I printed all that had reached me in a large volume with an analytical index containing, I think, some 700 pages. No names were printed, but only numbers indicating the country to which the critics belonged. In the case of memoranda agreed upon by the groups, the location of the group was named. There were two reasons for this practice. In the first place it was thought desirable that each student should feel the utmost freedom in expressing his views. In the second place it was desired that the opinion of each student should be considered by all the others on its merits and without reference to the authority which any particular name might carry.

So far as I can remember more than one thousand copies of this volume were printed. The copies were distributed to the groups and were also given freely to anyone who asked for them. The volume has never been published, but obviously there can be no element of secrecy with regard to a document at least one thousand copies of which were freely distributed

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to any studiously-minded person who desired to obtain one. Two years later a second volume containing further memoranda from the groups and individual students was circulated in the same way.

These volumes revealed the widest possible divergence of opinion amongst the various students engaged. In the light of this material I began to draft a report on the whole problem. Sections of the draft were printed as soon as they were written, and were circulated for criticism amongst the groups.

The subsequent creation of an Indian group at Agra, illustrates the spontaneous and informal manner in which this student movement has spread. During the war three members of the Oxford group, one an Indian, the other two officers in a Territorial regiment, found themselves at Agra. The Indian friend suggested the formation of a Round Table group for the purpose of studying the problem of Imperial reconstruction after the war. Several local officials were included, and I myself never heard of its existence until it was actually constituted and at work. The system meets the needs of those who feel that in these times of political transition private study and mutual discussion are essential to those who would properly discharge their duty as citizens. It will be harder for Indians to play their part in the coming reconstruction unless some such methods of study are first promoted amongst the educated classes.

Growth of Dominion Groups.

In Canada, meanwhile, the enquiry had excited such interest in University circles, that the groups

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each threatened to expand beyond a manageable size. The original groups therefore proposed the institution of new groups. I was faced by the difficulty, however, that the existing groups were sending in more documents than I could well digest. I stipulated therefore that I should not be expected to read the documents of any further groups, and on this understanding a large number of new groups were brought into existence for the purpose of study and self education. They have been supplied with all the proceedings of the organisation. Thus two classes of groups have come into existence.

(1) The original groups formed for the purpose of collaboration in the enquiry.

(2) Additional groups formed merely for discussion and self-education on the Imperial Problem.

In 1913 I went to Canada to discuss the development of the enquiry in the light of the experience we had gained, and summarised the results in an address delivered in October to the Toronto groups. The various solutions revealed by the divergent opinions of members could all, as I pointed out, be grouped under four headings—

(1) There were those who preferred that things should remain as they were.

(2) There were those who saw no solution but a declaration of Independence by the Dominions.

(3) There were those who believed that the unity of the Empire could be maintained by the separate and independant co-operation in foreign affairs of the several Governments of the Empire.

(4) Lastly there were those who believed that self-government could only be realised within the limits of the Commonwealth by reducing the United

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Kingdom to the status of a Dominion, and by relieving the Imperial Government of all responsibility for the domestic affairs of the British Isles, thus making it possible for the other communities of the Empire to be represented on the Imperial Government.

This last, I said, was the conclusion to which my own report would lead. I therefore urged that the other three views should be expounded in reports drawn up by the students who believed in them, for obviously I could not undertake to make the best possible case for a view which I did not hold. I then urged that the results of the enquiry could best be produced in the form of four reports instead of only one, thus leaving the public to draw its own conclusions after reading the best that could be said for each view by those who believed in it. On this and on other occasions I was at special pains to deprecate any tendency on the part of Round Table groups to drift into propaganda. It has happened that members of groups after years of study together have found themselves in substantial agreement. I have always taken the position that each individual is free to advocate the views he holds, and also that individuals are free to combine for advocacy in any new organisation, with a separate name of its own adopted for the purpose. But I have urged, and so far always with success, that the primary object of the Round Table groups would be lost if they ceased to consist of men who differ and are combined only for the purpose of study. A motion in favour of Imperial Union proposed at a meeting of delegates from the Australian groups in Melbourne last August, was negatived on this ground, although a majority, I think, believed in the ideal it embodied. I could not, of course, prevent a group

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carrying such a motion. The movement is largely a spontaneous growth; it has no rules and no constitution, and for that very reason it is not possible for any member to declare that this or that is a tenet of the Round Table organisation. It is merely a system for enabling people to unite for the study of their duties as citizens of this Commonwealth, as a guide to their own individual action. Lacking definite tenets, it naturally lacks the mechanism of a political organisation.

More than a thousand copies of the address delivered at Toronto were printed and circulated to the Round Table groups.

When war broke out in August, 1914, I had circulated four instalments of my report and had received a mass of valuable criticism thereon. A number of my colleagues then pointed out to me that the report would take some years to complete, while, if the British Commonwealth survived the struggle with Germany, the problem we were examining would be raised in its acutest form at the close of the war. They therefore asked me to put my practical conclusions in a short popular volume which would be ready for production whenever the crisis came. I agreed, subject to the understanding that in such a volume I could only deal with the self-governing communities, because I had as yet made no sufficient study of India.

First Publications.

I then revised the four instalments in the light of the criticisms made on them, wrote a final chapter, and reprinted the whole in one volume which was privately circulated amongst the Round Table

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groups under the title of 'The Project of a Commonwealth.'

Then I made the first draft of the popular volume since published under the title of 'The Problem of the Commonwealth'. It was printed and privately circulated in the usual way. A mass of criticism was sent in, much of which was destructive. But a general consensus of opinion was expressed that I should revise and publish it at once on my own authority, in order that the public might have time to think over the issues involved before peace came and the crisis was upon us. It was also urged that I should publish it over my own name in order to preserve the student character of the Round Table groups. Hitherto there had been no secret as to the authorship of various books I had printed; but I had never been in the habit of putting my name on the title page, because the question of authorship seemed so irrelevant to the value of the matter contained in the book. Now, however, as there was a good reason for signing the book, I decided to do so in order to make it clear once for all that no one but myself must be taken as responsible for the views I expressed. I therefore revised the whole book from the point of view that I must be prepared to defend every line and was at liberty to say things which I had previously omitted on the ground that they were contentious. Having finished the book for publication I then wrote the following preface :—

PREFACE (TO THE PROBLEM OF THE COMMONWEALTH).

In 1910, groups of men belonging to all political parties were formed in various centres in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa for studying the Imperial problem. Other groups were subsequently brought into existence in the United Kingdom, India and

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ewfoundland, and they all came to be known informally as 'Round Table groups,' from the name of the Quarterly Magazine instituted by their members as a medium of mutual information on Imperial affairs.

The task of preparing or editing a comprehensive report on the problem was undertaken by the present writer. Preliminary studies were distributed to the groups for criticism, and their criticisms, when collected, were printed and circulated for their mutual information. In the light of these criticisms, instalments of the report were prepared and printed for private circulation as each was finished. It presently appeared that any attempt to treat the subject in all its essential aspects would fill several volumes. Shortly before the war, therefore, it was decided to prepare a brief separate report on one single aspect of the Imperial problem, that raised by the question *how a British citizen in the Dominions can acquire the same control of foreign policy as one domiciled in the British Isles.* A draft was prepared and widely circulated for criticism in the autumn of 1915, and in view of this criticism the text has now been substantially revised.

The result is the present volume,* which aims merely at showing what in the nature of things are the changes *which must be made* before a British subject in the Dominions can acquire self-government in the same degree as one domiciled in the British Isles. No attempt could be made within the compass of this short report to discuss in detail the position of India and the great Dependencies of the Commonwealth. An adequate treatment of this important subject must be left to the main report which is still in progress. The first volume of this larger report will very shortly be published under the title of *The Commonwealth of Nations.*

The shorter report is now given to the public on the sole responsibility of the writer himself, because no other way was apparent in which it could be submitted to their judgment. Throughout he has worked in the light cast by the many-sided criticisms of the Round Table groups whose numerous members reflect every shade of opinion. Without these materials the report could never have been written in its present form; but the writer himself has, of necessity, had to decide what to reject and what to accept. He has no authority for stating, therefore, that the report represents any opinion but his own. The best materials, indeed, have often been furnished by colleagues who would hesitate to accept his conclusions as a whole or even in

* The cover is designed by a member of one of the groups. As the preliminary draft was privately circulated in the same cover, readers into whose hands copies may have come are warned not to mistake it for the published issue, which is easily recognized by the fact that it contains this signed preface. This, of course, did not appear in the draft, which is labelled on the first title-page "Printed for private circulation only."

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part. It is for that reason that he alone can make himself responsible for its issue to the public, who are invited to judge its conclusions purely in the light of the facts and reasons upon which they are based.

It is safe to say that the views here advanced, though containing little that is novel, have never been adopted as their creed by any recognized party, either in the Dominions or in the British Isles. In all these countries and in all these parties are friends known to the writer who reject, or others who accept, some or all of them. The main contention is this, that Dominion electorates must, in the not distant future, assume control of foreign affairs, yet cannot do so without deciding irrevocably whether they are to keep or to renounce their status as citizens of the British Commonwealth. In plain words, the issue, as seen by the writer, is whether the Dominions are to become independent republics, or whether this world-wide Commonwealth is destined to stand more closely united as the noblest of all political achievements. If in truth these are the issues, no greater have ever been raised by events for conscious decision. They are such as transcend parties and party creeds, as much as the immediate issues of the present war, or, indeed, more so. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to plead that political leaders should abstain, at least for so long as the war is in progress, from committing their followers either to or against the conclusions of this inquiry. And the same plea may be made to their organs in the press, that these crucial issues may be discussed freely and fully in their columns, but without throwing them into the ruts of party dispute. The rank and file, it is urged, may be left, for the present, uncommitted by those from whom they are used to take their direction to make their own criticisms, to think their own thoughts, to speak their own minds, until the time comes, as it must, when recognized leaders must lead. It may then happen that statesmen and journalists will find that here is a question which has nothing to do with existing party divisions. It is mainly for that reason that a writer connected with no political faction takes the responsibility of submitting his conclusions to the public in the present crisis, when party controversies are, or ought to be, held in suspense.

March 1916. L. CURTIS.

The book was then published over my name in May, 1916. As you will see the publication of the earlier book was promised in this preface. Some 1,000 copies had been circulated to the Round Table groups under the title of 'The Project of a Commonwealth.' The

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publishers thought that this title was so like that of the smaller book already published, 'The Problem of the Commonwealth,' that it would lead to confusion, so I changed the title to 'The Commonwealth of Nations' and added a preface, a copy of which you will find at the end of this letter. The larger book 'The Commonwealth of Nations' was then published about July 1916. The publication was followed by an article in the September issue of the Round Table magazine written four months after I had left England. I never saw it till October last, and I have printed the first three pages at the end of this letter in order that you may see how clearly the relation of the student groups to this book was explained. I think you will agree that a charge of conspiracy can scarcely be sustained against men who publish their proceedings in documents like this.

It was so difficult to obtain paper in England that, in April, I left for Canada and Australasia to arrange for the reprinting of the 'Problem of the Commonwealth' in those countries. In Australia, the book was reprinted under a local 'foreword' which I will here quote in full. The signatures are important, because they include the names of two Judges and one prominent Government official. In Australia and New Zealand, the traditions of the bench are as high as in England or India, and the association of their names is in itself a sufficient disproof of the charges which have here been brought against the Round Table and the author of this book.

FOREWORD.

In heartily recommending this book to the attention of Australasian readers, we do so without necessarily identifying ourselves either with its conclusions or with the arguments by which they have been reached.

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The issues raised, however, are of such vital importance to the future of the self-governing Dominions that they should be thoroughly understood and carefully considered. As Lord Cromer has said with regard to this book:* "Mr. Curtis in the preface to his work, invites political "leaders to suspend their judgment, and not to commit themselves "or their followers definitely in either sense. This advice will almost "certainly be followed. No request could be more reasonable. All "that can be done at present is to await events, to summon a Conference "at the close of the war in order to discuss all the issues involved, to "invite all concerned to formulate their proposals, and to resolve to "approach the whole subject in highly sympathetic spirit and without "undue adherence to preconceived notions based on arguments some "of which have fallen into desuetude."

We venture to endorse Lord Cromer's words, and would urge that while the war is in progress, the subject be studied as widely as possible and without reference to existing party divisions.

Edmund Barton	J. H. Hosking.
G. H. Knibbs	J. C. Watson.
J. T. Wilson	W. Harrison Moore
W. M. MacCallum	H. Y. Braddon.

In accordance with the spirit of this foreword, a movement was started in Canada, Australia and New Zealand to organise further groups to study the question during the war. Particular stress was laid on the point that these groups should include men of all opinions. The whole object of a Round Table group is to bring together students who differ. Discussions between men who begin by agreeing are unlikely to lead to new and fruitful results.

In the preface to 'The Problem of the Commonwealth' it is stated that 'no attempt will be made 'within the compass of this short report to discuss in 'detail the position of India and the great Dependencies of the Commonwealth. An adequate treatment 'of this important subject must be left to the main 'report which is still in progress.'

* "The Spectator," June 24th, 1916, p. 779.

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When this enquiry began our minds were fixed upon our own positions as British subjects domiciled in self-governing Dominions. Personally I had begun to realise, however faintly, the enormous importance of India as a factor in the problem. But I then believed that the mutual relations of the countries already endowed with self-government would have to be determined as a preliminary to a final adjustment of their relations with India. That view is reflected on p. 16 of 'The Commonwealth of Nations' which was written at least five years ago. If, when I return to England, that volume is reprinted I shall add a foot-note to the effect that I no longer hold that opinion. This is by no means the first time that further study has changed my views. A political student who cannot change his opinion, or is afraid to confess such change is obviously unfit for the task he has undertaken.

It was the circulation of these earlier chapters in 1912 which led Sir James Meston and Mr. Marris to urge upon us once more the vital importance of India as a factor in the problem we were studying. Their representations led to an informal meeting at a country house in England (I think in 1913) of various people interested in the subject for the purpose of discussing its bearing on India. The meeting lasted several days and was attended by various Indian officials including Mr. Marris and Sir James Meston, who endorsed the views which Mr. Marris had urged in 1909. After his return to India Sir James reopened the matter by letter. He urged that most of the standard books in India, by Strachey and others, were out of date. In the last twenty years, he said, political thought in India had been moving at a pace un-

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exampled in its previous history. He warned me against the danger of attempting to study India at a distance, and advised that I should visit the country for the purpose of hearing what Indians and especially the Nationalists themselves had to say on the subject. With that purpose in view he invited me to India and offered me the hospitality of his house. I must also add that in these letters he persistently advocated the representation of India on the Imperial Conference and at any future convention which might be arranged to consider the question of Imperial reconstruction.

My Visit to India.

In response to Sir James Meston's invitation I reached India at the end of last October as a passenger from Australia on the ill-fated Arabia. On the ship before landing I received a communication from a responsible official of the Bombay Government asking me to see him. I did so and was furnished with a copy of a public lecture on my books delivered by an Indian and with copies of speeches by leaders of the Home Rule movement touching on the same subject. I consider the action of the Bombay Government most proper, and I mention the fact here as it is typical of my relations with the various governments in India. I have since asked governments to furnish me with copies of speeches and newspaper articles relating to the matter upon which I am engaged. I have asked the Home Department to obtain and supply me with an estimate of the total number of voters of all kinds in India. I cannot recall any other instance in which I have asked for papers which had not been published.

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At Bombay I stayed with the Editor of *The Times of India*. I then went to Viceregal Lodge at Delhi in response to an invitation received and accepted in Australia, where I had first met Lord Chelmsford six years before. Then as Sir James Meston was unable to receive me till November 11th I went to Simla to see Sir Valentine Chirol. The reason for his being in India is well known and has no connection whatever with my presence here. He was an old friend whom I wanted to see, and as one who has a large acquaintance with all parts of India, his advice as to my future movements was of special value to a student who was new to the country. He accompanied me to Allahabad where we stayed with Sir James Meston. Mr. Marris was camped in the neighbourhood.

I had given my colleagues on the various Round Table groups to understand that I should devote myself during the cold weather to collecting opinions, information and material, returning to England in the spring to work them into shape. As to the places I should visit and as to the persons I should see in India during these six months, I had written to Sir James Meston that I should make no definite plans until I had seen him and Mr. Marris. During the three weeks between my landing and arrival at Allahabad I came to the conclusion that the task I had undertaken here was so formidable that I could not hope to do justice to if I left in the spring. I felt that I must write the first draft of what I was going to say in India itself in order to discuss it with men on the spot. The importance of warning my colleagues not to expect my return to England in the spring was the consideration which overshadowed all others in my mind.

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Sir James Meston was intensely busy, but he devoted an hour at once to discussing this question with Mr. Marris, Sir Valentine Chirol and myself and in helping me to frame a programme of my movements. They all agreed emphatically that I should remain in India during the summer to write. I then sat down to prepare a letter to my colleague, Mr. Kerr, explaining my change of plans. As everything which followed hinges on this letter I shall here insert it in full.

PRIVATE.]

Lieutenant-Governor's Camp,
United Provinces, India,
The 13th November 1916.

Dear Kerr,

I found a copy of your letter to Marris awaiting me on arrival here. Meanwhile the mass of letters to numerous correspondents which I wrote on the *Arabia* between Adelaide and Bombay, the accumulated arrears of months, are now at the bottom of the sea. My report on the Australian visit for circulation amongst the groups I fortunately reserved for printing at Bombay. Before this reaches you several hundred copies for general circulation should have reached you from the office of Sir Stanley Reed who kindly arranged the printing on his own machines. This report was supplemented by four holograph letters. Fortunately I retained copies of three of them which I am sending. For the rest I will ask my friends and correspondents to realize that, having devoted the voyage to discharging all my arrears of correspondence, the letters I wrote them are irretrievably lost and could not now be re-written without sacrificing time which I have no right to divert from the work in hand here.

After six days with Sir Stanley Reed, the editor of the *Times of India* at Bombay, I visited Lord Chelmsford at Delhi, joining Chirol at Simla on November 4, where I stayed with Mr. Claude Hill, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and had long talks with him and several of his colleagues. I was also able to digest a mass of interesting documents furnished to me at Bombay, Delhi and Simla, and to discuss things generally with members of the Indian and Provincial Governments who have treated me with the utmost kindness and freedom.

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On arriving here on November 11, I was able to sit down with Meston, Marris and Chirol to survey the task before me and to outline a plan for tackling it. This letter, which has been revised in detail by them, may be taken as representing our joint view.

Let me briefly survey the position as I see it. Under the auspices of the Round Table we have published two volumes, arguing that the British Commonwealth is necessary not merely to itself but to civilization as we conceive it, that it cannot be now saved by force of arms alone, and must still perish unless British subjects in the self-governing Dominions assume in time the same responsibility for matters common to the whole Empire as now rests upon British subjects in the United Kingdom. These volumes have received considerable attention not only in the United Kingdom but in all the Dominions, three of which I have just visited. I have before me several hundred reviews of the books gathered from all these countries. I have addressed and have been publicly questioned at numerous meetings. I have discussed the matter with persons innumerable. The general verdict so obtained is that the case we have made is hard to answer and largely convincing. But all this is subject to the question specifically left unanswered in chapter XIX of "the Problem" "How is India to be worked into the settlement which ought to follow the war?"

The position is well illustrated in the "red page" of the *Sydney Bulletin* of September 28, my last copy of which I attach. Should this copy also perish in transit you could probably obtain a copy at the Colonial Institute.

The position thus is that thousands of readers, whose number daily increases and will presently include all the more thoughtful minds in the British Commonwealth, are expecting a volume in which we undertake to treat this the thorniest and most delicate aspect of the whole problem. Whatever we say will be properly subject to a searching fire of criticism. But what weighs with me even more is this. We have obtained the confidence of a large number of readers—for the simple reason that people are impressed by the fact that a real problem was foreseen and no time nor pains were spared in our attempt to define its limits and work the solution out. Seeley's results were necessarily limited by his lack of any knowledge at first hand either of the Dominions or of India. With the Round Table organization behind him Seeley by his own knowledge and insight might have gone further than us. If we have been able to go further than him it is not merely that we followed in his train, but also because we have so far based our study of the relations of these countries on a preliminary field study of the countries concerned, conducted in close co-operation with people in those countries. We have

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thus gained the confidence of a large number of readers who having no opportunity of checking our facts and observations will take them more or less at face value. Thus we have established a kind of credit which may now be either used or abused. Owing to the character and the magnitude of the audience we now address all over the world, we can do more than any one else outside official circles to indicate a practicable path through the crisis before us provided our work is based on sufficient first-hand knowledge. Without such knowledge we stand to do more mischief than any one else.

The question, an answer to which I am here to formulate, is a simple one. We are convinced (and have now convinced many others) that the British Commonwealth cannot survive unless its supreme responsibilities are shared by British subjects in the self-governing Dominions on an equal footing with those in the United Kingdom. To secure that end, the mechanism of the Imperial Government must be revised and enlarged so as to admit the people of the Dominions. Thereby the people of the Dominions will assume control of the future and fate of the 370,000,000 of people in the Commonwealth who have not as yet attained to self-government. Yet to lump these 370,000,000 into one class is to ignore facts. The people of Central Africa are scarcely capable of forming any valid opinion as to how they ought to be governed. There the task of rulers is to study their natural history and, so far as may be, their spiritual history, and provide them with the best government we can in the light of that study. We can scarcely invite their opinion for the reason that they themselves cannot formulate any opinion. With the people of India it is otherwise. This vast varied and closely congested community contains small but important sections who can and do formulate opinions on political questions. The opinion of these sections cannot be accepted as the final criterion of Indian policy if only because the sections in question are relatively too small. If the responsibility of final decision were committed to the sections capable of forming an opinion, they could not discharge it. They could not themselves enforce their decisions on the overwhelming majority who would overpower them, and we cannot enforce political decisions which are not ours. Indian opinion cannot rule India, at any rate until the Indians capable of forming such opinion are united, organized and numerous enough to exact regular, willing and continuous obedience from their fellow-countrymen who have not as yet acquired the faculty of political judgment. This would be so if Indian opinion were really as sound and disinterested as our own now is, with all its conspicuous failures. Certainly it is not. It has to improve in quality as well as in quantity, and it must be the first business of our Government to improve both. But still Indian opinion there is, in a sense in which

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there is no political opinion in Central Africa. And the fact rightly recognized. Broadly speaking, Government is at pains o recognize such opinion as there is. It accepts it where it can, often when it thinks that Nationalist opinion is not the best, ignoring it only where it appears so unsound that to accept and act upon it would lead to disaster. The policy of the British Government is to develop that opinion and to allow it to influence policy more and more. The responsibility of final decision it still reserves to itself. But it now looks to a time, however remote, when it will be able to transfer that responsibility to a section of Indians sufficiently large, disinterested and capable of sound political judgment to assume it.

That in the faintest outline is the position in India as I see it, and that is how it differs from the position in Central Africa.

Now consider the bearings of all this on the problem before us. Our new and reformed Imperial Government must control India and Central Africa—

(*a*) in their domestic affairs,

(*b*) in their external affairs.

The domestic affairs (*a*) of these two groups are already controlled on different principles. Now in controlling their external affairs, closely connected as they always are with domestic affairs, will you be right in lumping India with Central Africa and in treating them on the same footing? If so, let us do it, facing the fact that we cannot effect the changes advocated in the volumes already published without provoking in India an agitation, which, as I judge might lead to bloodshed. Let us face that, if it is right, with all the attendant risks; but only after an exhaustive analysis of the *prima facie* case that as our method of controlling the domestic affairs of India and Central Africa differ, to that same extent *should our method of controlling their external affairs differ.* If we are right in allowing such Indian opinion as there is to influence domestic policy, must we not find a way of enabling that same opinion to influence external policy? Must not Indian influence be brought to bear on Imperial decisions to the same extent that it is being brought to bear on purely Indian decisions?

Our task then is to bring home to the public in the United Kingdom and the Dominions how India differs from a country like Great Britain on the one hand and from Central Africa on the other, and how that difference is now reflected in the character of its government. We must outline clearly the problems which arise from the contact of East and West and the disaster which awaits a failure to supply their adequate solution by realizing and expressing the principle of Government for which we stand. We must then go on to suggest a treatment of India in the general work of Imperial reconstruction in harmony with the facts adduced in the foregoing chapters.

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And all this must be done with the closest attention to its effects upon educated opinion here. We must do our best to make Indian Nationalists realize the truth that like South Africa all their hopes and aspirations are dependent on the maintenance of the British Commonwealth and of their permanent membership therein. We must do our best to convince them of the mischief to their own cause wrought by the deliberate campaign which is on foot here to embitter feeling against the Dominions. The cultivation of hate here as in Ireland is the greatest of all the obstacles to freedom, an *ignis fatuus* which only leads men into an ever-deepening morass. But anything we say will be futile unless we have taken the trouble to study their position at first hand. I must make the leaders scattered over India feel that I have been at pains to learn their aspirations from their own lips and to try and understand them. We shall do positive harm if they have reason to say that we offer opinions on questions vitally affecting this vast community without even discussing with Indians what Indians have to say on the subject. They are reading and discussing our books. The whole stock in Macmillan's hands here is already exhausted. *New India* has devoted five articles to reviewing "the Problem" and for your further information I attach a lecture by a moderate Nationalist, Pradhan, on both the volumes.

Having drafted already the historical section of the volume up to 1813 and done much of the reading necessary to bring it up to date, I happily start with the necessary grounding of book-work. Meston is putting me in touch with the History Professor here who has all the history at his finger's end and will help me to put the historical sketch into a sound and workmanlike form, just as Egerton, Fisher, Seton, Rait and others have done in the previous volume. The question how I am to equip myself for the task of presenting India as it is and of showing how it can be fitted into the framework we have outlined in the previous volumes can best be answered by giving you the programme sketched for me by Chirol, Meston and Marris. Till November 24 I remain here, where the provincial legislature is in session, seeing nationalists, educationalists, missionaries, government officials, and unofficial Europeans. These are classes I must see in every centre I visit. On Novemher 25 Chirol and I join in camp an experienced Commissioner in the Central Provinces and a colleague of Chirol's on the Public Services Commission. He is both an important source of general information and will be able to shew me really primitive India at first hand. For while I have said that India must be distinguished from a primitive society, such as that of Central Africa, it is to be realized that India yet contains primitive tribes as backward as and more numerous than the aborigines in all Africa.

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On December 6 I am to reach Calcutta where I shall stay with the American Y. M. C. A., who are closely in touch with the Bengali youth, Duke's friend, Gourlay, and Lord Carmichael. Here, of course, I must pay special attention to the position of the great European community in Calcutta and Assam.

On December 24 I rejoin Meston for a week at Lucknow to attend the National Congress and the All-India Muslim League which will then both be holding their annual sessions there. Thence about January 1 I go to Bombay for a few days with Chirol who will then take me to the Resident in Mysore, who will show me an advanced Native State in working. On January 15 I go to Madras, and thence on January 25 I leave to visit the Round Table group at Agra. Then I am to go with Marris into camp again in a typical district of Northern India, see the Collector at work and what village life in India means—the life led by a vast majority of the population. About February 18 I return to Delhi where Lord Chelmsford wants me to see the Viceroy's Legislative Council at work. There I shall have ample opportunities of seeing the Nationalist members and the members of the Government of India, several of whom I have already met, and all of whom show every possible disposition to help us in our work. By that time I should have a long list of things upon which I want accurate information obtainable only from the Secretariats. From Delhi I am also to make expeditions to see Sir Michael O'Dwyer at Lahore, and to get a glance at frontier conditions.

Then about April I shall begin to arrange my materials and ideas and to draft out what I am going to say. For on this point we are all of one mind. I must draft out my results before I leave India for two principal reasons. In the first place the moment one starts to draft one runs into points which cannot be dealt with, without accurate documentary information. Before leaving England I wanted to see how the so-called elective members on the Indian and Provincial Councils were elected and who and how many were the electors. The information was not obtainable in the India Office, had to be sent for to India and had not arrived when I left. Even here the complete information can only be furnished by reference to Provincial Governments. It is vital to the whole treatment of the subject to show how many of the 315,000,000 inhabitants of India have any voice, direct and indirect, in choosing these so-called elective bodies, and also how far election is as yet a reality at all. To leave India without having the facts and figures settled is to court indefinite delay, and it is impossible to foresee and collect all the material necessary until you actually draft.

But there is a more important consideration. As a sort of super-journalist much of my information has been derived from pumping

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people with first-hand knowledge. But whenever I have worked out my results and submitted them to those on whose verbal communications they are based, a host of misunderstandings have invariably come to light. This is why our reports have on the whole stood fire as well as they have. We have drawn criticism from responsible quarters before we published. I should hesitate to publish anything until I had threshed it through with half a dozen men like Meston and Marris first. I shall not always agree with them (or they with each other), but I must know first where I differ and also why, if I am bold enough to go on differing. Meanwhile copies can be sent to you so that the Indian moot can prepare their criticisms against my return, the date of which it is useless to forecast as yet. All I can say is that I shall spare no pains to get the results ready for publication before the next Imperial Conference can be held. The period of the cold weather is all too short in which to acquire the knowledge necessary for such a task, and to leave India, without first submitting my version of the facts, my reasoning upon them and my final conclusions to those who have furnished the materials is to court misunderstanding from the outset.

Meantime let me frankly confess that the task of coping with all the correspondence which reaches me in a country where stenographers are scarcely available is plainly impossible. I could only do so by neglecting the writing up of my notes, and leaving so much information obtained by word of mouth to sink into the limbo of forgotten things. My only chance is to make careful *subsequent* notes of conversations, for most people can't talk freely to a man armed with a pencil and note-book. For this reason I shall be deeply indebted to all my friends who will acquit me of avoidable neglect in this matter.

I am printing this letter for circulation amongst friends to whom I cannot write, including the secretaries of local groups. I will ask each secretary to read it to his group. I shall be obliged if everyone to whom it is sent will treat it just as they would a personal letter written and signed by myself and marked "Private." Yours sincerely,

L. CURTIS.

To—The Secretary of the Round Table, 175, Piccadilly, London, W.

From the foregoing narrative it will easily be understood that I have developed in the course of years close personal relations with an enormous number of friends all over the Empire. Their homes are open to me when I travel, as mine is to them when they come to England. They write to me freely

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and I can only keep pace with my correspondents by the assistance of one or two skilled stenographers. Even so, in order to deal with the letters I receive, I have often been driven to multiplying copies of a private letter to one friend and sending them to a large number of others. I have commonly followed this practice where a letter dealt with matters affecting the progress of our work. I have often kept by me a pile of such copies for some weeks, using them for replies to my Round Table colleagues as their letters came in. My typist having enlisted I was unable to bring him with me as I had done on a previous tour, and so I have found myself much in the position of a doctor who tries to deal on foot with a practice developed with the aid of a motor. On my recent voyage from Australia to India I had, by dint of continuous writing, worked off my accumulated arrears. I had recently heard that all the results were lost in the Arabia, so I wrote to Mr. Kerr with the intention of following my usual practice.

When I sat down to write this letter on November 12th I had not discussed the political situation with Sir James Meston at all. I know this, because shortly before I left on November 24th I had half an hour's talk with Sir James on the subject, and he expressed his regret that he had not found time to discuss the political situation, and promised to do so when I rejoined him at Lucknow for Christmas week. With Mr. Marris I can have discussed it very little, if at all, as during the brief intervals we had together we were largely occupied with the question of my own plans.

On the evening of November 13th I showed the draft of the letter to Sir Valentine Chirol who returned it to me with a few verbal corrections of

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phraseology. I then asked Sir James, during a meal, if he would also read it, to which he agreed. I also explained why I wanted to send copies to other friends and asked whether it would be possible for me to engage the services of a typist in Allahabad, as I had often done in Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Sir James thought not and offered to have some copies run off for me on his press at my expense. On my journey through the Dominions I had often been indebted to both private and official for clerical assistance. At one Government House the staff placed at my disposal a typist who happened not to be busy for the moment. In India, where printing is so cheap that it largely takes the place of typewriting, there seemed nothing unusual in the offer. The account for the printing was sent me at Calcutta, and was paid by me while I was at Lucknow.

As my writing is not very good, Sir James preferred to read the letter in proof. It was therefore sent to the press, and I gave the proof to Sir James, but he was so busy that he was unable to deal with it before the evening of November 23rd, the day before I left. Later on I learned on unimpeachable authority, though he was too generous to say so himself to me, that he had not found time to read the proof. It came back to my hands without a single alteration. My recollection is (though I might be mistaken in this) that I then inserted in the proof at the end of the third paragraph the words 'This letter, which has been revised in 'detail by them, may be taken as representing our 'joint view.' When inserting this sentence I was thinking solely of the subject before our minds, my own plans, and especially of the agreement that I ought to remain here during the summer. The proof

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having lain on Sir James' table from about November 15th till the night of November 23rd, a few hours before my departure, I completely overlooked the fact that I had not shewn it to Mr. Marris. He never saw the letter, and I never realised that he had not seen it, until a month later. The thing was a blunder occasioned by the haste in which I was trying to dispose of a number of different matters on the eve of my departure. My apologies are due to Mr. Marris and to him alone. Had I been writing for publication the mistake could not have occurred because the letter would have needed his signature.

I left the proof with the Private Secretary, asking him to print 500 copies and despatch some of them to Mr. Kerr and others, all personal friends whom I had recently visited in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Some other copies were to be sent to me, and the rest were to be retained by the Private Secretary till I came to Lucknow. All these copies were to be sent in duplicate by successive mails on account of war risks. In fact I doubled the order I should have given under ordinary conditions. To Canada, where there are upwards of twenty groups, I asked for fifty to be sent in two packets by successive mails. A large number were held in reserve for sending to future correspondents. The contention that I was printing not a private letter but a semi-public circular is answered by the closing words of the letter—'I am 'printing this letter for circulation amongst friends to 'whom I cannot write, including secretaries of local 'groups. I will ask each Secretary to read it to his 'group. I shall be obliged if everyone to whom it is 'sent will treat it just as they would a personal letter 'written and signed by myself and marked *Private*.'

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Turning to the letter itself there is one point upon which I have to express my regret. I refer to the statement 'that India yet contains primitive tribes as 'backward as and more numerous than the aborigines 'in all Africa.' I now realise that the figures I had in mind included the depressed classes in India who certainly stand on a plane of civilisation entirely different from Negro society. I am sorry to have made such an error even in a private letter, yet strangely enough it has scarcely been noticed.

The Answer to the Charges.

The answer to most of the serious charges brought is contained in the letter itself. Take for instance the most serious charge—that I urged the subjection of India to the colonies at the cost of bloodshed. That word is purposely chosen to point a warning—as a preface to a plea for finding a course acceptable to India. Incidentally I add 'Let us face that, *if it is right* with 'all the attendant risks.' I do not wish to alter a word of that sentence and never shall. We resisted the invasion of Belgium with all the attendant risks, though we knew that the world would run with blood—because it was right. To prevent the secession of South Carolina Lincoln steeped his country in her own blood—because it was right. If a thing is right it cannot be wrong, and to anyone who does not hold the faith held by the Jains, bloodshed may on occasion be right. But I do hold that no one is justified in adopting a course which may lead to bloodshed, unless after the fullest enquiry he is assured that it is right, and has left no stone unturned to find another. The chance that a course may provoke bloodshed is nearly always a proof that it is wrong. Personally I should say that Ireland

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should be given home rule when and *only when* the reform can be carried without civil war. On the other hand to take a purely imaginary case, if some one had stirred up the Europeans resident in India to resist the Morley-Minto reforms, I personally should have favoured the use of any force necessary to repress such resistance. No general rule can be framed in such matters, it is all a question of opinion, and each case must be judged on its merits. But this I do say that a thoughtful man will be slow to accept a new policy if he is warned that it may lead to bloodshed. It will need the most cogent reasons to overcome the suspicion with which he will view it. Writing to thoughtful men I felt it my duty to tell them that here was a policy to which India would have the profoundest objections and went on to urge that India herself must be given a voice in the organ of government which controlled her affairs. The rest of the paragraph is an argument that the opinion of educated India is entitled to such a place.

The charge that I have compared Indians to negroes I pass. Anyone who can read the letter at all can judge of its truth. It is just as true, no more and no less, to say that I compared Indians to Europeans.

The charge that I am a foe to self-government for India is also refuted by the letter itself. 'We must outline clearly,' I wrote, 'the problems which arise from 'the contact of East and West and the disaster which 'awaits a failure to supply their adequate solution, by 'realising and expressing the *principle of government* '*for which we stand.*' The whole argument of the books I have published is that self-government is the principle for which we stand. In a condensed phrase, such as friends who know each other's ideas

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use to each other, I am saying that self-government must be applied to the East as well as to the West.

With one exception the passage in my letter dealing with politics is simply a crude and hasty summary of views already contained in my published books. The one exception is the argument that India must be given a voice in Imperial affairs. My last book 'The Problem of Commonwealth' is specifically confined to the position of the United Kingdom and the Dominions in a future Imperial Government. I had to express my honest belief that no Imperial Cabinet could control foreign affairs unless it included the Secretary of State for India. But I had specifically left the position of India in a reformed Imperial Government to be treated in a separate volume, which could only be written after a local study of the views of Indians themselves. I had already reached the view urged upon me by Sir James Meston that India must have a voice in Imperial affairs, a view confirmed by the experiences of my short stay in India. This much I was prepared to say to my colleagues, though I was not, nor am I yet, prepared to express any final view as to how this can be done. That surely is a matter to which any serious student would desire to give more consideration than was possible after three weeks in the country concerned.

This summary of my views was purely incidental to the point occupying our minds on November 11th and 12th which was,—my movements in India and the length of my stay there. There was no call for any agreement between us on Indian politics either then or later. As I stated at the end of the letter, 'I shall not always agree with them (or they with each

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other)'. I said this because I do not always agree with them. It is not clear in the letter that the agreement relates only to my plans. Writing to private friends anxious to know my plans the ambiguity was of little importance. Had the letter been read by all concerned with a view to signing it for publication such an ambiguity could scarcely have escaped notice and would have been removed.

The governing factor in the case is that this was a private letter, written without any thought of publication, and must be read as a private letter. A man writing for publication is writing for an infinite variety of readers, many of whom may know nothing of the subject with which he deals. He must be careful to supply all the information necessary, without which his meaning will be liable to be misunderstood. With that purpose in view he must try to picture to himself and avoid every cause of misunderstanding or offence to which his word may give rise. If I had been writing with any thought of publication, I should have referred to the prefaces of my books or have quoted their contents I should have weighed every statement and every word. Personally I never publish anything which has not been rewritten many times over. In a letter addressed to intimate friends to whom all the facts contained in my prefaces were familiar, there was no need to do this. If people were bound to write to each other with the same care that they write for publication life would be intolerable, just as intolerable as if they were expected to converse in private with the same care that a man should use in a public speech. Criminal documents or conversations are not entitled to privilege. But conspiracy involves

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secrecy at least. There was no secrecy in my relations to the other gentlemen concerned. There was no secrecy in the organisation or objects of the Round Table groups. The whole of the facts from first to last had been made public by those charged with conspiracy. I had no right to expect the public in India to know all these facts. But I was not writing for the Indian nor for any other public. If I had been I should have been most careful to recount the necessary facts. I was writing to private friends who knew them by heart. The points, however, which I wish to emphasise are those which do not appear on the face of the letter itself. They are two.

(1) When I wrote the letter on November 13th I had not discussed the current situation in India with Sir James Meston, I did not know his views and was not in a position to state them. As a matter of fact he did not read the proof.

(2) Through an inadvertence, for which I am solely responsible, Mr. Marris never saw the letter at all, until he knew that it was being made public a month later.

Misrepresentations.

I must here mention an incident which occurred after I had written this letter and before I left Allahabad. I was strongly advised by some European as well as by Indian friends to avoid staying with officials. While at Allahabad I received from an unknown hand a cutting from a newspaper, which ran as follows :

'*Stormy Petrels.*

'We are very sorry to see that Mr. Lionel Curtis is travelling with 'one of educated India's most deadly foes, Sir Valentine Chirol. It

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'bodes ill for Mr. Curtis' attitude towards India, already none too 'favourable. They come from Simla to stay at Government House, 'Allahabad. Sir Valentine Chirol is ever a welcome guest of the 'highest officials, and his fatal influence distorts their view of India. 'That one of the leaders of the Round Table is seeing India under 'such auspices will greatly increase her difficulties in winning her 'place in the Empire.'

The point deserves some attention because every other Englishman who comes to study Indian affairs and has numerous friends amongst the officials will find himself in the same predicament. My own solution was as follows :—Sir James Meston had introduced me to the Hon'ble Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, member of the Viceroy's Council, the Hon'ble M. C. Y. Chintamani, Editor of the *Leader*, and Mr. Ishwar Saran, explained to them the reasons for my coming to India, and then withdrew, leaving me alone to listen to their views. The interview led to a courteous invitation, which I gladly accepted, to discuss matters further with a number of their friends at Dr. Sapru's house. To this gathering I read the cutting which had reached me in the meantime, and pointed to the difficulty in which it placed me. I had numerous friends, I said, in the service, and knew their various points of view pretty well before I came here. It was for that reason that, on the advice of Sir James Meston, I had come here to make the acquaintance of Indians and learn their point of view. Now in order to gain the friendship and confidence of Indian gentlemen, was I to make a show of suspending my relations with Englishmen who were my friends before I reached India and would be when I had left it? That was scarcely the way to earn the friendship of Indians. Rather I preferred to make it known to them who my friends and what my connections were,

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and then leave them to judge whether to admit me to their intimacy. So I told them the history of my connection with Sir James Meston, Mr. Marris and Sir Valentine Chirol. I told them also that I had been head of the department in the Transvaal which was charged with controlling Asiatic immigration. That is the course I have always followed until the publicity forced upon me rendered it unnecessary, and I have found that Indians, like everyone else, are readier to talk freely to a man, when they find that he has nothing to conceal.

On November 24th I left Allahabad for the Central Provinces, reached Calcutta thence on December 16th and rejoined Sir James Meston at Lucknow on December 24th, in order to be present as a visitor at the meetings of the Indian National Congress and the All Indian Moslem League.

On December 25th a Lucknow paper announced that

'The anti-Indian forces are at work. They are organising their 'campaign. The ROUND TABLE propagandists are very busy indeed 'and they have influence too . . . Our countrymen should bear in 'mind that the enemies of Indian aspirations of the Curtis and 'Chirol kind mean business, and they are the respectable guests at 'Government House. They may have access to information which 'we cannot dream of. They are very astute men hiding as they do, 'sharping (sic) claws within velvet paws. Great is the danger ahead.'

This was followed by another article on the 26th headed

BEWARE OF THE ROUND TABLE. BEWARE OF CURTIS,

in which it was said :

'The heroes of the Round Table are prepared to have their way. 'They are sowing the seeds of wild mischief. They are prepared 'to effect the changes at whatever cost. We will protest with 'all our strength and vigour against the over-lordship of the Colonies 'over us. But we shall not even at the worst provocation, budge an

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'inch from the straight road of strict constitutional agitation. Ahin-'sa Paramo Dharma, say our shastras. We shall not resort to, nor 'shall we tolerate violence. We shall not do anything which might 'hurt even the offending man.'

On the 27th I received information which gave me the first clue to this language. Some Indian friends informed me that a report was being spread like wild-fire amongst the crowds assembled for the Congress that I had advocated the subjection of India to the Colonies at the cost of bloodshed, and that I had classed Indians with Negroes. Meantime the letter had been privately printed under a headline calculated to bias the reader in advance. On seeing this letter itself, my friends had found that it was in fact an argument against a policy which might, I feared, lead to bloodshed, and against the treatment of India in Imperial affairs on the same basis as Central Africa. My friends believed that the letter was about to be published in the *Bombay Chronicle* and presently I received a telegram confirming this news.

My Letter to the Press.

On telling Sir James Meston and Mr. Marris what had happened I learned for the first time that I had failed to shew Mr. Marris the draft. I then wrote the following letter, which together with my letter to Mr. Kerr was immediately circulated to the leading papers throughout India :

Government House,
Lucknow:
The 28th December 1916.

Sir,

Yesterday I learned that a private letter of mine had been surreptitiously obtained (I do not know how or by whom)

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multiplied and distributed amongst a large number of people here. I now see from the public telegrams that it has been published in whole or in part in the *Bombay Chronicle*. The matter was brought to my notice by Indian gentlemen attending the Congress meeting who had no hesitation in expressing their disapproval of such conduct. They warned me that preposterous inferences were being drawn by means of phrases quoted from the letter without reference to the context in which they appeared. The best answer to such misconstructions is the full text of the letter, and I shall feel myself under a very great obligation if you can find space to publish it in full. The letter explains itself and requires no justification to those who will read it carefully, remembering that it was written to intimate friends and not for publication. This is specifically stated in its last sentence.

An account of the objects and methods of the Round Table is given in the prefaces to the two books recently published over my name. It is an association of men working in groups in the various parts of the Commonwealth engaged in studying imperial problems for their own political guidance. As General Secretary I have been engaged in collecting and publishing materials for such study. The attached letter is an attempt to give the Secretary of the London Group, my impression, formed after spending a few weeks in India, of the character, magnitude and delicacy of the work to be done here.

With regard to the three friends whose names are mentioned in my letter, a word must be added. My earlier studies of public affairs were concerned with conditions in England and South Africa, countries with which I was familiar; and the possibility that self-government was not an institution appropriate only to European communities did not occupy my thoughts. It was in discussion with the friends named that I was first persuaded that self-government was the aim to which British policy in India must be directed. They showed me that any complete study of imperial problems must include India: and I am here now in deference to their strong advice to come and

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study Indian opinion on the spot. I naturally consulted them in arranging my tour in India.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

L. CURTIS.

Mr. Marris was averse even to the brief reference I made to himself in this letter. If I had consulted my own wishes I should have added a statement to the effect that he had never seen my letter of November 13th at all.

At the time I believed that a wide publication of the letter would suffice to contradict the erroneous rumours which were current as to what I had written; and in this belief I was fortified by letters I received from Indian friends in the Congress, themselves pronounced Nationalists.

Let me quote from one of those letters :—

'I am writing this to express to you my personal regret as also 'that of many others that a private letter like this should be 'published. I should like you to believe that there are a good many 'of us who think it ungentlemanly to take advantage of a secret 'discovery of a private letter and to publish it to the world.'

'It has startled me to find that the passage in your letter where you 'speak of bloodshed, if India is to be treated in her external affairs 'as Africa, should be capable of misconstruction by any man of educa- 'tion. I am afraid attempts will be made to spread this misconstruc- 'tion in the Congress camp and that the younger and less thoughtful 'members will be misled by it, but I trust that this will not in any 'way deter you from carrying out the object which has brought you 'to India and specially that part of it which aims at ascertaining 'the opinions of various classes of people ?'

In justice to the Indian National Congress and All India Moslem League, amongst whose members I have many personal friends, I am bound to add that the circulation of my letter at their gatherings was not the work of these responsible public bodies. To

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prove this statement let me quote from a letter written to me by one of their recognised leaders ;

'I was surprised to find that a private letter written by you to a 'friend was published. As you rightly say no responsible member of 'the Indian National Congress had any part or share in it.'

The immediate purpose to which my letter was put is now a matter of common knowledge. The excitement raised by its circulation served to clinch the union between the Hindu and Moslem communities which it was desired to effect at Lucknow. With regard to the means I have nothing to say here. With regard to the object I am glad to think that I have been the involuntary cause of a better understanding between those two great sections of the Indian People. As a student of history I have shown the heritage of mischief which followed from attempts made in the Eighteenth Century to rule Ireland and the American Colonies by fostering their divisions, and especially religious divisions. One may not agree with the immediate methods and object of any particular movement; but so long as that movement is legitimate in itself, one may surely rejoice in any tendency it may have to unite the religious and social divisions of India. It is in the nature of despotisms to foster such divisions, and a free system of government which seeks to build on such quicksands will surely come to grief. And this doctrine has been taught me not merely by history but by every thoughtful official I have met in this country. How different the situation would be if every educated Indian and Englishman here could learn to know more of each other's motives and minds.

To return to my letter, I will ask you to glance at a note received by the oversea mail as I write. It is

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from an English friend who has just heard of this controversy and he says :

'I have read the letter twice and it appears to me that there is 'nothing in it that all the world might not know. After all you don't 'want to conceal the fact that Meston, Marris and Chirol are friends 'of yours and that you have consulted them fully as to your plan of 'campaign, which seemed to me an excellent one for finding out the 'truth. In any case you couldn't have concealed your friendships 'even if you had wanted to—which you wouldn't. The longer I live 'the more convinced I become that the only sound plan is to conceal 'nothing. I think you did quite right to publish your letter, and it 'seems to me you have nothing to regret. No honest man can find 'fault with it.'

Privacy not Secrecy.

If a man has no secrets to keep about himself the publication of his private letters or conversation will seldom hurt him. But the point I want you to consider is this. It may inflict a lasting injury on public interests. Secrecy is one thing and privacy another and the respect due to privacy is even more vital to freedom in public affairs than in family life. Glance at the procedure of the Indian National Congress and you will see this at once. The business submitted to the Congress is first carefully prepared in the Subjects Committee, which sits in private. The reason is that the spokesmen of various sections may express their views to each other and yet be free to change them. They do this with the proper and legitimate end in view of arriving at a policy to which all can agree before submitting it to the Congress. Now suppose that one of these speeches in the Subjects Committee was overheard or some private letter between two leaders was seized and then published in England to be read by people who scarcely know what the Congress is, what vast misunderstandings

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might be created and how easily a charge of conspiracy could be raised! One private utterance or letter torn from its surroundings can be used to create false impressions which inflict grave injury on the public at large, not merely in India but in England as well. For are we not all members of one body?

The privacy observed by the Round Table groups in their studies is based upon reasons somewhat different, but equally good. The object of the system is that men may think out their views (each for himself) before they declare and act upon them. In order to do that they must be able to write down their opinions for discussion with each other. I do this myself and submit my views to my colleagues for the very reason that I am not sure of those views. The moment that I have a body of views of which I am sure, I publish them with the facts and the reasons upon which they are based. Clearly it is a greater evil to the public than to myself if private papers containing views of which I am not yet certain are seized upon and published, not merely as my views, but as those of the whole organisation. Privacy is essential to political study until the results of the study are complete. When the student has published those results he is entitled to be judged by what he has published and by nothing else. It is not, however, a question of private rights. To deny this privacy to students of public affairs is to stifle the breath of freedom itself—to undermine the foundations upon which alone real liberty can be raised.

I will ask you to consider one special difficulty with which such work as mine is attended in India. To begin with the language in which Englishmen and educated Indians exchange their ideas is to Indians a

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foreign tongue. I think that both should keep this fact in mind more carefully than they do. An Indian gentleman of great ability, with whom I conversed freely in English, courteously pointed to certain passages in my books which had filled him with indignation. I had no difficulty in shewing him that he had read these passages to mean the exact opposite of that which they actually meant. He had missed points of syntax vital to the sense, just as I myself miss them when I read French. But when such impressions get firmly fixed in the minds of a number of young men. whose knowledge of English is no better perhaps than mine of French, they are very difficult to correct. Only the other day I heard from a friend, of a young Indian who insisted that in my letter I had urged the subjection of India to the Colonies at the cost of bloodshed. My friend referred him to my letter, but having re-read it he declined to change his opinion. I believe his case is that of a vast number of young Indians. It is difficult indeed to correct false impressions of a document written in a foreign tongue which have once sunk into their minds. I would urge their elders to weigh this fact before they lightly create such impressions.

My Conception of Indian Groups.

As I said at the opening of this letter, the charge of conspiracy brought against the Round Table and myself could not have been brought in the other parts of the British Commonwealth where the facts set cut in this narrative were already known. For the general ignorance of these facts here I do not think that anyone is to blame. If for the last four or five years Round Table groups, scattered through India, had

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been at work studying the position of India in the Commonwealth, I scarcely think that this indictment could have been drawn. The methods and objects of the system would have been too well known. As it was, but a single group had come into being and that but lately. I have often been asked both in England, the Dominions and here why I had never before come to India to organise groups. The answer is simple. In this enquiry we have been working to keep pace with events which moved too fast for us, and I have not had enough years in my life to be in all the places that I could wish to have visited. This task like so many others is too great for the powers of any man, certainly for mine. Men can only do the best they can in the time they have, trusting each other to forgive their most imperfect results. But I had not been in India a month before I came to the conclusion that here if anywhere was need for the methods of enquiry which the Round Table provides. At Allahabad, at Calcutta and elsewhere I saw a great many Indians of all shades of opinion, and discussed the position of India in the Empire. Nearly all of them said 'Why cannot all these matters be discussed with us like this?' And I found a number of officials who felt the same. There were others, however, who took the opposite view. They thought that, if officials and Indians gathered socially in their own houses to discuss even the relations of India to the rest of the Empire, their opinions and intentions might be quoted and misrepresented, even though no misrepresentation was meant, and on becoming widely known might result in some such excitement as has actually occurred. Experience has proved the reality of these dangers, and yet, in the face of all that has happened, my

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opinion remains unchanged. Those dangers are largely due to the mutual suspicion which prevails between educated Indians and officials.

There is more in common between some of my Indian and official friends than they realise, and much of the mutual distrust would vanish if they formed the habit of friendly discussion with each other. India is full of chasms which divide one class from another, but I think the most dangerous of all chasms is that which divides officials of my own race from educated Indians as a class. I do not say that they there are no educated Indians on intimate terms with officials. Thank God there are. India would be in a parlous plight if there were not. But I do say that such friendships are too rare. When I add that officials and educated Indians stand opposed like two political parties, I am only pointing to acknowledged facts. From the nature of their relative positions, this must be so to some extent. It was so in the Transvaal before responsible government. But there the Dutch and ourselves were of one religion and closely akin. Deep as our differences were we mixed in a way which has never been found possible in India. Where chasms are fixed by facts we can never hope to remove them entirely. We cannot fill in the gulfs which divide races, creeds or even classes from each other. But we can throw bridges across them and we leave such chasms unbridged at our peril. Here I felt was a work to which the Round Table was naturally fitted and might contribute in a small way. So I hit on the idea of getting Englishmen with no official position to bring Indians and officials together to study the future relations of India to England and the other

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parts of the British Commonwealth. This, I felt, was a subject which lies a little beyond the immediate problems of Indian Government. The idea was that they should begin by discussing together the two books on the subject I had published in order that later on they might work on the next one which was still in the making. My intention was to draft the chapters of the volume on India, and submit them to these groups. To me it would have been the greatest advantage to have had their criticisms. The opinions expressed by Indians and officials would certainly have differed in many respects, but after a long experience of these methods, I am satisfied that the criticisms of men who differ is never so valuable as when they have first discussed them together before writing them down. When people have talked things over, a host of misunderstandings vanish, unexpected points of agreement begin to appear, and the real points of difference are defined and brought into true proportion. It is only by this concussion of minds which differ that the grain of opinion can be winnowed from the chaff.

And a more important change is also produced when the real matter in dispute has been sifted out; for men find that they have learned to bear with each other's opinions in the process. There is no reason why an honest difference of opinion should anger men with each other, and yet we are always doing that unreasonable thing. My best friend once told me that I am most intolerant of people who differ from my opinions. He was never so much my friend as when he told me this home truth, and, if you think of it, this habit of getting angry with people because they differ, is one of the greatest bars to self-government

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there is. Self-government depends so much on our power of discussing things calmly together, of understanding points of view from which we differ, and also in believing that they are held as honestly as our own. I sometimes feel that a society entirely composed of people like me might not be able to govern itself. I have always found, however, that the members of Round Table groups tend to become more tolerant of each other's opinions. They are brought together because they differ, and in discussing their differences they come to understand and think better of each other. It is good to think that most of the illwill in the world is due to our knowing each other so little.

And so I quietly proceeded with this scheme for founding a few Round Table groups, undeterred by the demands made in some of the papers that Government should forbid its servants to have anything to do with such bodies. In Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and elsewhere independent Englishmen were found to undertake the work. They agreed to collect Indians and officials in their own homes to study this problem, the greatest problem I venture to say which has ever confronted men, the question how races as different as the world contains, are to live together and manage their own affairs in a Commonwealth which includes more than a quarter of the human race. The vision of Indians included in this fellowship of students united by nothing but a common resolve to discover and discharge their duty as citizens, each for himself, was actually in sight. Then suddenly the agitation achieved its end and the vision failed.

In happier times when men look back on these events and think them over with calmer minds, I wonder what they will say. I wonder whether they will

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think that India was best served by those who conceived this project or by those who misunderstood it, made India misunderstand it and so brought it to nought.

The Evils of Suspicion.

Let us now turn from the Round Table groups to the quarterly review from which for convenience sake these informal bodies of students borrowed their name. Personally I have never written a word in it. Its entire management has lain in the hands of my colleague, Mr. Kerr. Though exclusively devoted to the study of contemporary politics, it is scrupulously detached from any party. It largely consists of articles on the various communities of the Empire contributed by Round Table students in each. The writer alone is responsible for his own articles; but it is the rule that he should discuss his first draft with his group and then revise it before sending it to the Editor. This of course applies to the Dominions where groups were in existence. Each issue of the journal contains a notice specifying the name of one secretary in each country, to whom those desiring information about the Round Table might apply. In the case of India, several such people have been named. These facts in themselves belie any charge of conspiracy in the matter.

In the speech which opened the Indian National Congress at Lucknow, I was naturally pleased to hear some remarks on India in the Round Table, quoted with approval. Now, for no other reason than that my letter was addressed to him, the Editor, Mr. Kerr is attacked along with myself as one of the enemies of India. Some Indian papers are viewing

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with suspicion and alarm his recent appointment to the Prime Minister's Staff.

Is it really in the true interests of India that names should be added to the list of her recognised enemies so freely? I do not know the man within whose power it lies to make Mr. Kerr an enemy of India. He is known to some of your leaders and I challenge their verdict. Must you really decline to recognise as friends Englishmen who believe in the goal to which you aspire, and do their best to make others believe in it too? Must you treat them as enemies, unless they are prepared to say that the goal can be reached in just the manner and at just the pace which your leaders desire? Consider the effect on those who do not appreciate your aims, when they see one who does, who is perhaps regarded as dangerously advanced, singled out for attack by the Indian Press. I am not thinking of myself, nor of my official friends. But I do say that if people elsewhere were to see Mr. Kerr named as one of the men whom Indians recognised as a treacherous foe, they would rub their eyes and wonder what strange illusion had seized this country.

But the mischief does not end there. Suspicions like these choke the channels by which the aspirations of India can be made to be understood elsewhere. Let me quote from a letter written by Mr. Kerr to one of his correspondents here, a copy of which he sent to me for my information and which I have authority to use.

'I think we ought to have another article on India this winter, or at 'any rate not later than the Spring. From the outside point of view, 'what matters is giving people here and in the Dominions some idea 'of the effect of the War on Indian life and opinion. But there is one

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'important point which I should like to see you make with all the 'force at your command, and that is the imperative necessity that 'people in Great Britain and the Dominions should realise that India 'is going to put forward, and rightly put forward, two demands after 'the War, and that they must give earnest and sympathetic considera- 'tion to these demands without delay. I don't think you need go 'into detail about the nature of the demands unless you feel inclined 'to do so. I think it will be sufficient to say that the first is for a 'further step towards self-government in India, and the second that 'the interests and views of India should be represented directly when 'the future of the Empire and its policy is under consideration.

'I think the greatest danger in the future is that the Indian 'demands will be pushed on one side on the ground that it is impossi- 'ble to take them into consideration for some years owing to the 'pressure of business connected with the liquidation of the War in 'Europe. If we are to avoid the danger from delay of this kind it is 'very important, I think, that the Round Table, which has very 'greatly increased its influence since the War began, should make 'thinking men realise that whatever they may think about the proper 'answer to make to the Indian demand, they must be prepared 'to make some answer, and to make it without delay, without, that 'is, sub-ordinating India's claim to time and attention to those of 'this country.

'I don't know that this letter is very clear. We want an article in 'the Round Table on India and I suggest to you that the main conclu- 'sion which the reader should draw from it should be that the 'responsibility rests upon him of seeing that the Indian demands are 'sympathetically handled without delay after the War.'

This letter he followed up by another to myself, in which he suggests that the Indian article should always be submitted for criticism before despatch to some

'Indian who is in touch with the main currents of Indian thought,' and he adds 'his criticism of the draft and his suggestions as to the 'matters of importance which ought to be recorded would be valuable. 'I don't imagine you will find it easy to do this, but I don't think 'there is anything which you can do in India which would bear richer 'fruit than that you should arrange that the Round Table should 'contain a quarterly review sympathetic yet impartial, and well 'informed, of what has been going on in India in the preceding three 'months.'

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These are the real views of a man against whom a warning has since been issued in the Indian Press as being implicated in a wide-spread conspiracy to frustrate the hopes of educated Indians.

With the views expressed in these letters from Mr. Kerr I entirely agreed. It was partly with that object in view that I set to work to establish Round Table groups including Indians and Officials in the various provincial centres. I was trying to arrange that in future articles written in India should be submitted to Indians and Officials and revised in the light of their criticisms before being sent to England. This system, strictly analogous to that which exists in England and the Dominions, has now been frustrated. The pages of the Round Table itself are now being ransacked for extracts to support the charge of hostility against India. Expressions of sympathy are used as a proof of treachery. The charge of 'velvet 'paws hiding sharping claws' has resounded through the Press. The mere name of the Round Table has become the most powerful weapon for raising distrust. This would not be possible if the Round Table were judged on its merits and judged as a whole. The difficulty is that for every man who reads these productions in India thousands read what is said of them in the Press. The same is true of my own books and the same will be true of this letter.

A large quarterly like the Round Table is not intended so much for the average readers, as for those who write for average readers. It is meant to be a storehouse of information of all kinds upon which publicists can draw. Its articles must be taken on their merits and as representing nothing beyond the minds and information of the

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individual writer of each. The Editor himself is solely responsible for whatever he writes. The Review has published an article on Ireland written by an avowed Nationalist. It habitually prints articles written by men who voice the views of labour and also of capital. If publicists search its back numbers they can prove by judicious extracts almost anything they like. But let anyone read its numbers from first to last and then say whether it is the organ of men who deserved to be ranked as enemies of educated India. But it is not and never will be the organ of any party in India. Nor would it serve the best interests of any such party if it was. As you see from Mr. Kerr's letter he thinks that the demands of educated India ought to be understood in England and the Dominions more widely than they are. I am not saying that he agrees with them all, and indeed those which are now being made had not been formulated when he wrote. But he thinks that the interests not merely of India but of the whole Commonwealth require that those demands should be clearly understood and promptly considered after the war. I think he is right. I think that plea could have been argued in the Round Table with effect, for the very reason that it is not the organ of the Indian National party. But if for the last six years the Round Table had voiced all their claims without criticism or discrimination, it would be of little service as a medium through which the case for an early and sympathetic consideration of those claims could be urged now.

As it is I have had to advise the Editor that so great is the mistrust with which the Round Table is viewed that, for the present, the only service it can render to

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India is to remain silent with regard to its affairs. This legend of conspiracy has been rooted so firmly in the minds of thousands who never see the Round Table itself that such articles as Mr. Kerr desired would be quoted as evidence of some sinister motive. I am sure that anyone who has seen how freely the charge of treachery has been brought since Congress week would feel that silence is the only public-spirited course, until time and a fuller knowledge of facts has cleared those dark suspicions away. And that is why I am now doing my best to give you the facts.

But the matter goes deeper than the Round Table, so I ask you to bear with me while I deal with it further. There were always Englishmen of the first rank, and of great authority with their fellow countrymen, ready to voice the South African claim for self-government. Now why is it that, since the days of Bright and Bradlaugh, no one who carried real weight with the British public has been found to voice the aspirations of India? It is a real evil and a real danger. It ought to be remedied and I trust that it will. I hope and believe you will find an increasing number of Englishmen of the first rank who think you are right in seeking to attain self-government as soon as possible. But those whose opinion has sufficient weight with British public opinion to be useful to your cause are the men who think for themselves. While agreeing with you as to the end, they are almost certain to differ as to some of the means. Your cause has everything to gain if you will leave them to support it so far as they can. Your English sympathisers who support your programme, your whole programme and nothing but your programme, are felt to have lost their sense of discrimination and

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therefore lose weight with the public they address. I ask for tolerance to those who believe in your aims and are ready to support them in public, while claiming the right to hold and express views of their own as to the roads by which they can be reached.

India and the Dominions.

For myself, I have come to India to learn, and every day I regret more deeply that I could not have come here before. The question I started to examine some eight years ago was the one forced upon my immediate friends and myself by events, the relations of England to the self-governing Dominions. Blame me as much as you like for this narrowness of view; and yet I would urge, we have more to gain by trying to understand each other. My first step was to study opinion in the other Dominions as well as in South Africa. Now the factor which impressed me most in Canada, New Zealand and Australia was the rooted aversion these peoples have to any scheme which meant their sharing in the government of India. There were many of them ready enough to send members to a Parliament which controlled the foreign affairs of the British Commonwealth. A much smaller minority were prepared to send members to a Parliament which controlled India. The feeling against such proposals was overwhelming and the reason is not far to seek. To these young democratic communities the principle of self-government is the breath of their nostrils. It is almost a religion. They feel as if there were something inherently wrong in one people ruling another. It is the same feeling as that which makes the Americans dislike governing the Phillipines and decline to restore

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order in Mexico. My first impressions on this subject were strongly confirmed on my recent visit to these Dominions. I scarcely recall one of the numerous meetings I addressed at which I was not asked why India was not given self-government and what steps were being taken in that direction.

So evident was this feeling in these Dominions that I set out to enquire whether it was possible for a parliament to control foreign affairs without controlling the government of India. Now any such proposal meant that the Imperial Cabinet responsible to that Parliament would include the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but not the Secretary of State for India, who would have to be transferred to the new Dominion Cabinet created to govern the British Isles and answerable solely to a British parliament and a British electorate.

Here was a purely practical question which could not be tested by logic or reasoning, but only by the experience of men who had worked the machine. So I asked all the ministers I knew who had ever sat in an Imperial Cabinet whether they could picture the Foreign Secretary, the Minister for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty doing their work in a Cabinet which did not contain the Secretary of State for India. From all but one I received the unhesitating answer that they could not imagine it even for a year. The one exception thought that such an arrangement might be worked for a very short time, but was certain to break down in a few years. This last opinion I obtained only after I had finished and signed 'The Problem of the Commonwealth.'

As an independent researcher my business is to emphasize those truths which people don't want to

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hear. The public has plenty of people to tell them the things they want to hear. The principal object of the Round Table groups is that students may learn to recognise those particular truths from which the natural man recoils. The people of the Dominions rightly aspire to control their own foreign affairs and yet retain their status as British citizens. On the other hand they detest the idea of paying taxes to any Imperial Parliament, even to one upon which their own representatives sit. The enquiry convinced me that, unless they sent members and paid taxes to an Imperial Parliament, they could not control their foreign affairs and also remain British subjects. But I do not think that doctrine is more distasteful to them than the idea of having anything to do with the Government of India. There are, I may add, a large number of people in England who share that view.

If you will read 'The Problem of the Commonwealth' you will see that it is throughout an argument in favour of two doctrines addressed to people who are deeply averse to both. You will see by reference to page 202 that I knew that India was extremely averse to one of them.

I am not a political leader who has to think of his following, nor a journalist who has to consider his circulation, but an isolated student of public affairs. I have been careful to speak for no one but myself, because I felt that one great need of the age was men who would search out and emphasize those truths from which the mind naturally recoils. Self-government would be a vastly easier matter than it is, if all we had to do was to don our wishing-caps and then count them. In truth self-government depends upon

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the capacity of men to recognise the truths they most dislike and to sacrifice their several wishes to the public good.

The root of the present trouble is that this insistence of mine on the doctrine that you cannot at present divide the control of India and the control of foreign affairs, has led to a false impression here that the Dominions want to control Indian affairs. There is nothing they less desire, and the best remedy for this false impression is a clear, unhesitating statement of the facts.

But why, you will naturally enquire, should all these communities be asked to adopt a course which the vast majority in each of them detest? I have given the answer in these books, and I ask you to consider it on its merits. I believe that, unless such changes are faced, the whole Commonwealth will dissolve and perish, and with it the principle of self-government for which that Commonwealth stands. It was in the same belief that Lord Roberts advocated national service. Lord Roberts never thought that the people wanted national service, but he urged its adoption on the ground that a worse thing might befall, and befallen it has. We now have compulsory service and with it a devastating war which its timely acceptance would have quickly ended and might have prevented.

A Vital Statement of Principle.

My insistence on this belief that the Secretary of State for India must sit in a reformed Imperial Parliament and not in the new Dominion Government of the British Isles has led you to treat this book as one hostile to your aspirations. Indian reviewers were

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so possessed with that idea, that they have seized upon and quoted all the passages which could be represented as hostile to their immediate programme and have failed to notice those which endorse their ultimate aims. I will ask you to read one of these passages, on page 205 of the Problem of Commonwealth.

'*Principle of the Commonwealth as applicable to the Government of Dependencies:—*

'The inclusion in one vast Commonwealth of the most democratic 'countries in the world side by side with ancient and primitive 'countries, which constitute whole sections of the human race and 'are scattered all over the world, is the consequence neither of 'chance nor of forethought. This conjunction of human elements so 'different in one world Commonwealth is the gradual result of the 'deepest necessities of human life. Of these the first is to establish 'ordered relations between most different races of men ordained by 'Providence to dwell together in one planet, the various regions of 'which have now been brought into intimate contact with one another. 'In order to do this the Commonwealth has had to evolve order from 'chaos in politically backward communities like India. But the 'Commonwealth cannot, like Despotisms, rest content with establishing order in and between the communities it includes. It must by 'its nature prepare those communities first to maintain order within 'themselves. It must make them, to an ever-increasing degree, the 'instruments whereby justice is ordained and enforced between one 'citizen and another. The peoples of India and Egypt, no less than 'those of the British Isles and Dominions, must be gradually schooled 'to the management of their national affairs. But even when this 'has been done, the goal of the Commonwealth has not been reached, 'until the mutual relations of all the self governing nations it includes 'are controlled by the will of their peoples acting in common. It is 'not enough that free communities should submit their relations 'to the rule of law. Until all those peoples control that law the 'principle by which the Commonwealth exists is unfulfilled. The 'task of preparing for freedom the races which cannot as yet govern 'themselves is the supreme duty of those who can. It is the spiritual 'end for which the Commonwealth exists, and material order is 'nothing except as a means to it.'

I have before me two reviews, each consisting of five successive articles. I am asked in these reviews

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why I do not apply my arguments in favour of self-government to India. The answer is contained in the passage I have quoted. I do apply those arguments to India, and yet amongst all the numerous quotations made in these ten articles no room was found for the passage above quoted. For every Indian who reads the book, there are, as I have said, thousands who read the reviews, and I wonder if their real interests would have suffered if space had been found to add this quotation.

When considering this passage I will ask you to fix your attention on the matter and to forgive the manner. Now that I have made some Indian friends, I begin to realise how deeply, in their position, I should resent being told that I 'must gradually be schooled to the management of my 'national affairs.' I came here in order to learn how to recognise and avoid such mistakes. But in justice let me add that I spared no pains to avoid them before I came. Every word of this chapter was submitted to friends who had spent their lives in India and had impressed upon me the duty of avoiding needless offence. Under their eyes I re-wrote it again and again selecting the words they suggested as least likely to wound. I had spoken, for instance, of the people of the Dependencies, as distinguished from those in the self-governing countries, as 'non-Europeans.' I was advised to discard this word because it might suggest some idea of racial inferiority and to use 'politically backward' instead, on the ground that Indians recognised this backwardness as a fact they were anxious to change. Since coming to India this particular phrase has been pointed out to me as specially obnoxious. Please accept an expression of

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honest regret. Now that you know the facts, I will ask you to judge me by my intention. My stay here has made me realise that we in England have fallen into a habit of writing in one way, when we are talking of fellow-citizens in the Dominions, and in another when we are talking of our fellow-citizens in India and Egypt. It is one of the faults which can only be corrected by a closer acquaintance, and that is why it is of such importance that Indians and Englishmen should meet and learn to discuss their mutual relations without provoking each other. I have never yet seen a situation in which the public interests were served by men wounding each others feelings. You will do me a service if you will continue to point out anything I may write which is not true, which had better have been left unsaid, or, if necessary to be said, could have been put in words less likely to hurt. And, it will help still further if you can add example to precept. In all my personal intercourse with Indians I cannot recall a single thing said which I thought was meant to offend. It is with our pens that we wound, rather than with our tongues. I do say that we Englishmen have got to learn to write to our Indian fellow-citizens exactly as we write to each other. But will you also realise that in that case we shall begin to write with greater frankness. And will you reciprocate that frankness with the same gentleness and courtesy that you use in personal intercourse.

Now leaving faults of expression aside, I ask you to consider what the passage to which I have drawn your attention means. In plain words it means these two things—

(1) That it is the duty of those who govern the whole British Commonwealth to do everything in

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their power to enable Indians to govern themselves as soon as possible.

(2) That Indians must also come to share in the government of the British Commonwealth as a whole.

An Analogy from a Native State.

That, in all sincerity, is my view. But it is also the view of a large number of people in England, and in all the Dominions. It is vital that you should realise how numerous are your friends in all these countries who instinctively believe in self-government for India; but no less important that you should understand what we mean by that term. My own view is fully explained in 'The Problem of the Commonwealth'; but to put it in a nutshell I will tell you of a conversation I had with a very able and responsible friend in one of the Native States. I suggested that a great deal of misunderstanding was due to the fact that the term 'self-government' was used to include two ideas, which were in fact totally separate. 'In this State,' I said, 'you have government of Indians 'by Indians. It is true you have some European 'Officials who tell me that your Government is treat-'ing them well. But none the less the Government 'of His Highness the Maharaja is the government of 'Indians by an Indian. It is what we might appro-'priately call "Home rule," if that name had not 'been assumed by a particular movement. But to 'shew you what I mean by self-government, let me ask 'you a question. Do you think that His Highness 'would be well advised to make the two following 'changes at once?'

> '(1) To make his whole legislative council elective.

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'(2) To undertake to appoint as Diwan the 'leader who commanded a majority of votes in 'the council, and also to dismiss him the 'moment he ceased to command a majority.'

The most capable Indian administrators I have met are those who have gained their experience in the Native States, which proves the value of responsibility in training men. Some of them are men of the most liberal views, but I doubt whether any of them would think that so drastic a change can be made at one stroke. I think they would say that a Prince who made such a change too quickly would be likely to throw his State into confusion, and thereby delay its progress towards self-government. He would advise that several intermediate steps should be taken and I think he would hesitate to name any exact time within which the final change could be brought about.

Be that as it may, you will now see what I mean when I speak of self-government. To avoid the risk of this misunderstanding it will be better, I suggest, to drop this ambiguous term and to use the words 'responsible government' instead.

Responsible Government.

And now let me ask you to consider this system of responsible government as applied, not to a native state, but to the vast and complicated structure of British India. Here you have two orders of government to deal with, the Government of India and also the various Governments of the provinces into which India is divided. Personally I do not flinch from saying that I look forward to a time when in all these provinces, and also in the capital of India itself,

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elective legislatures will sit, with executive wholly consisting of the leaders who for the time being command a majority and resign the moment they cease to command it.

May I put the matter in another way. At present the *final* authority in Indian affairs rests not with the Viceroy in Council nor with the Secretary of State, nor even with Parliament itself, but with the British electorate. In plain words a British election might easily turn on the question of self-government in India. Now in virtue of that final authority, Parliament, the agent of the British electorate, has already delegated certain powers to Indian electorates. It may and, in my opinion, should continue to hand over largely increased powers to Indian electorates. But responsible government means handing over the *final* authority in Indian affairs to the Indian electorate, and that, as I understand these matters, will not be achieved until at the capitals of India and of all its provinces there are parliaments which by their votes can either turn their executive out of office or bring about a general election.

That is the end to which I am looking, and which can, I believe, be attained if the goal is first clearly conceived, if the steps towards it are carefully thought out, if sufficient time is taken in making such steps, and also if each step is taken in time. I should find it difficult to suggest whether India has more to fear from over-haste or procrastination. And this I say, knowing that so wise, experienced and advanced a democrat as Lord Morley has spoken of that goal as one which may never be reached in India. With all due deference to an authority so weighty I believe that it can, must, and will be reached,

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and nothing which I have seen in India has shaken or is likely to shake that faith.

Immediate fulfilment of that project, however, is not the change for which any organised body of Indian opinion is asking at this moment. The reason for this caution on the part of your leaders is, I believe, exactly the same as that which would deter the most liberal statesman to be found in any of the most progressive of the Native States. I think he would say that any attempt to effect such a change too suddenly might lead to a breakdown of the whole machinery so serious that instead of achieving responsible government, its real achievement would be greatly postponed.

This, however, is not the question that I want to discuss now. It is not the question that I came here to examine, and let me say, once for all, that it is not a point upon which I feel that my own opinion is of any particular value. To quote the words of my own letter, the subject of my enquiry is to see 'how India is to be worked into the settlement which ought to follow the war.' For that purpose it is quite sufficient to note that, as a believer in responsible government for India, I have before me two possible alternatives and two only—

(1) That responsible government can be established in one operation, at once.

(2) That responsible government can only be established by a series of changes which will take some time.

I beg you to keep those two alternatives in mind, and to realise the importance of working out the practical consequences of both on the problem before us. Think what that problem is. The British Com-

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monwealth contains upwards of 430,000,000 souls. But the government charged with the defence of this vast world-state is responsible to, and can draw its revenues from, only the 45,000,000 people of the British Isles. Now if the war stopped to-day I believe that the charges on the war-debt would exceed the total revenue of the United Kingdom before the war which was under £200,000,000. When peace is made it is not unlikely that £300,000,000 per annum will be required to meet the interest and sinking fund on debt, before a shilling is available for the Navy, for the Army, for Public Education, or for all the other departments of government. Realise that for the loan just raised the charges for interest alone will exceed £50,000,000 a year, more than a quarter of the whole national revenue before the war. In addition to all this vast sums will have to be found as pensions for those disabled by wounds and for the dependents of those who have lost their lives. When peace is restored the situation will be such that no measure of taxation which the wit of government can devise will avail to raise revenue enough from these 45,000,000 souls to provide such armaments as every sane man will agree are essential to the safety of a state including a fourth part of the human race. On the other hand if these revenues are raised from all its 430,000,000 inhabitants there is money enough and to spare to provide every possible security which the state needs and to prevent the recurrence of wars like that which is now devastating the world.

Now why cannot the Imperial Parliament as at present established raise that money from the whole Commonwealth? The answer is plain; because it represents only the people of the British Isles, and

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because in 1778 Parliament pledged itself by solemn statute which provides that 'from and after the passing of this Act the King and Parliament of Great Britain will not impose any Duty, Tax or Assessment payable in any of His Majesty's Colonies, Provinces or Plantations in North America or the West Indies.' This statutory pledge has since been interpreted to cover each and every territory which since that time has been added to the King's realms.

We are thus faced by the practical position that the Imperial Parliament can impose no revenues for the common defence outside the British Isles, so long as it remains identical with the British Parliament. It cannot do this, until it becomes a really Imperial Parliament and represents the other countries included in this world-wide Commonwealth.

Now why cannot the present House of Commons be made to represent countries outside the United Kingdom? I have given the answer in Chapter XIV of the Problem of the Commonwealth, and I have not seen that anyone has yet challenged it. I think you may take it as final and accepted that no country outside the British Isles can be represented in the Parliament which controls the social affairs and local finances of Great Britain. Please read this chapter and examine the question for yourselves; but will you allow me for the present to take it as granted that neither you, nor the Dominions, nor anyone else, can be represented on a body which acts as the national and domestic government of the British Isles.

The Root of the Problem.

Here we come to the root of the whole problem. The supreme government of this vast Commonwealth

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is a duplex government, that is to say, two governments rolled into one. My whole argument, which I ask you to examine on its merits, is that after this war it must be divided into two and so be brought into harmony with the facts. There must be one government for the British Isles responsible for its local domestic affairs, and therefore elected by the British people alone. There must also be another government which has no more to do with the domestic affairs of the British Isles than with those of Canada and Australia, which is responsible for the safety of the Commonwealth as a whole, and upon which its other communities, as well as the British Isles, can be represented.

It is my sincere conviction, though I do not ask you to agree with it, that unless this change is made in the constitution of the British Commonwealth, and made in time, it will perish and with it the hopes of freedom for which it stands, those of India along with the rest. That is my conviction, and I have given some reasons for it in two books; and believing that as I do, I am now trying to see what place India ought to occupy in the new and altered system.

Now suppose that it is really possible to equip India at once with a constitution the counterpart of that under which the peoples of Canada, Australia and South Africa govern themselves, the problem upon which I am working is a simple one, and needs no special treatment. But as a political mechanic, who is trying to explore the subject, I am not justified in making that assumption. I must explore the other alternative and see where it leads, and I urge that you will be wise to do the same.

Responsible government means that the final authority in Indian affairs will have been transferred to an

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Indian Parliament. We are now supposing that India will approach this final transfer by several steps. The nature of those steps and the pace at which each is to be taken can and should be freely discussed in India. But the *final* decision as to what they are to be, and how rapidly they can be taken, must of necessity rest with the government outside India, in which the final authority remains, until the transfer is complete and India has assumed the position of a self-governing Dominion. At present that authority rests with the Imperial Parliament, which is also the Parliament of Great Britain. But suppose that, as I have predicted, that duplex Parliament is divided into two, a purely British Parliament upon which no one but the people of Britain can be represented, and a true Imperial Parliament upon which the other communities of the Commonwealth can find a place. Which of those two bodies do you think should decide how fast India is to travel towards responsible government?

In the 'Problem of the Commonwealth' I have argued that, in the nature of things, that decision must rest with the Imperial Parliament. I did so because every man who had sat on the Cabinet to whom I had access told me that an Imperial Cabinet could not control foreign affairs unless it included the Secretary of State for India. I laid great stress on the point, just because I knew that this involved consequences distasteful not only to the people of India, but also to those of the Dominions. I thought, and think, that I was right in this; but I have so often been wrong that I am quite prepared to believe that I may be mistaken in this also. For the purpose of our present discussion let us assume that I was mistaken and that whether the Secretary of State for India is to

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be answerable to the domestic Parliament of the United Kingdom or to an Imperial Parliament is purely a matter of option.

Now which would you choose? In making this choice it will help if we try to picture the two governments between which your choice is to lie.

On the purely British Parliament, elected to deal with the domestic affairs of the British Isles and to vote revenues which are purely British, we can say with practical certainty that your representatives can find no place on it.

With an Imperial Parliament, which has nothing to do with the domestic affairs of the British Isles, it is otherwise. The whole point of calling such a parliament into being is that the other communities of the Commonwealth, as well as Britain, can be represented upon it. Now the only point in which my letter differed from my published books was this, that I was telling my friends that I was now convinced that India must be represented on that body. After a longer stay in India I am prepared to go further still. I now think that the Imperial Parliament should include an Upper as well as a Lower House. I think that the Upper House should bear to the Lower, a relation similar to, though not exactly the same as, that which the House of Lords bears to the House of Commons since the passing of the Parliament Act. As to the representation of India on both those Houses the appointment of His Highness the Maharajah of Bikaner to represent the Princes of India at the present Imperial Conference, and of Sir S. Sinha has created a precedent which will, I believe, never be reversed.

Assuming then that the Imperial Parliament

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is to include two houses, I will deal with the Upper Chamber first. I suggest that we want such an Upper House in order to give a voice to certain interests which could not be represented in a purely elective chamber vested with power to turn the Imperial Government out of office.

Let me point to two such interests. Of the total population of India a quarter, I think, are in Feudatory States and nearly a quarter are followers of Islam. The Feudatory States, no less than the Dominions, are committed to peace and war by the decisions of the Imperial Government. I submit that their princes should have a voice in the counsels which lead to such decisions. There is no more difficulty in representing them on the Upper House of a real Imperial Parliament, than there was in representing the Scottish and Irish Peers in the House of Lords. And then there are the followers of Islam, not only in India but also outside it. Turkey contains less than 20,000,0000 Moslems. India alone contains 66,000,000, while Egypt and Central Africa must include some 34,000,000 more, making in all at least 100,000,000 followers of Islam. The majority of Moslems are in fact citizens of the British Commonwealth, although the principal centres and authorities of their faith are outside its limits. The result, as this war has shown, is that foreign relations affect the Moslem community at a sensitive point and in various ways as they affect no other important section of British subjects. Surely it would greatly add to the strength of this Commonwealth if this vast cosmic community could feel that when foreign affairs were under discussion their views were voiced by spokesmen of their own faith.

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Here then are two great interests, the Feudatory States and the great Islamic community, a place for whose spokesmen could be found in an Upper Chamber, such as could scarcely be found in a Lower House which must be a purely elective assembly.

Before leaving the Upper House I want also to suggest that, according to all precedent, its members would be eligible for office in the Ministry itself.

Now let us come to the Lower House, which must, I assume, be wholly elective. I am still within the limit of views which I am not likely to alter, in recording my personal opinion that elected representatives of India—by which I must not be taken necessarily to mean representatives of the present Indian electorate—should sit in that House also. As to the basis upon which the various communities of this vast Commonwealth should be represented on the Lower House, I have no views to offer at present. It belongs to a field which I have not as yet explored, and a student is not called upon to offer opinions upon a part of his subject until he has carefully examined it. I have often been criticised for publishing opinions upon any section of this whole problem before I had worked out every detail of every part of it. My excuse is that the subject is too vast, and events are moving too quickly, for such treatment. I am trying to do my best under the difficult conditions imposed by these times, and, therefore, I ask your indulgence for offering opinions on some things before I am able to suggest solutions of others.

So far, however, I am able to go. I believe that the Imperial Parliament should consist of two Houses, that India should have her spokesmen on both; and this consequence would, I believe, of necessity follow,

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that those spokesmen would be eligible for seats in the Ministry.

A Summary of Results.

Let us now summarise our results. The questions which most deeply affect India are these—

(1) By what steps should she reach responsible government?

(2) How fast can those steps be taken?

The final decision on such questions must rest with one of two authorities, either—

I. A government which can be answerable only to the people of the British Isles, or

II. A Government which can be made answerable to all the communities of the British Commonwealth and therefore one which, as I personally hope and believe, will contain Indians authorised to voice the wishes of her people.

Upon which of these two authorities would you wish these final decisions to rest, until they are made and the need for making such decisions has ceased? And in making your choice it is well that you should realise that the English members of Parliament upon whose sympathy you have learned to count are just as likely to seek election to the Imperial Parliament as to the new Parliament created to deal with the local affairs of the British Isles. If the Imperial Parliament continued to deal with India, I believe, that nearly all of them would seek election to that body. The vital point, however, is that the Imperial Parliament could include members directly answerable to yourselves. The local Parliament of the British Isles could not.

It is difficult to conceive a question more important to Indians at the present juncture of affairs, and for

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their judgment upon it to be clouded by the passions excited in this controversy would be nothing short of a disaster. We are living in times when events are forcing decisions upon us. They punish our delays, and if we quarrel and hesitate, when we ought to be thinking, resolving and acting, events will rule those decisions over our heads. We have then to accept the punishment with the decision, as has happened in the case of compulsory service. Our only safety lies in grasping the issues at stake. I am sorry to have caused a personal controversy which is threatening to cloud such issues just now, when counsels that are calm and clear, insight and mutual good will are the first necessities of the time. I greatly desire to end this controversy. It can hurt me but little, and would not matter if it hurt me much. But to public interests it may do grave and permanent mischief, if suffered to obscure questions which can only be settled aright so far as they are clearly understood. A controversy which has raised such passions cannot be closed by allowing it to die; for in dying it leaves the mind of the public strewn with untruths, which presently spring to life in a harvest of thorns. The best that I can do therefore is to tell the truth patiently and in detail from beginning to end. And in doing so I have tried not to spare my own mistakes; for why should one do otherwise? Avoidance of errors is the privilege of those who walk by paths paved with precedents. Such avoidance is at best 'a fugitive and cloistered virtue.' Untravelled paths are traced only by those who attempt many in vain, recognise their mistakes, turn back and try others anew. You who are now committed to fields which are strange to you will learn to regard your own mistakes as your

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fastest friends and your trustiest guides. Never disown them. Call them by their name. Understand and consult them. Your achievements you can leave to speak for themselves.

And in noting mistakes, others, as well as my own, I have tried, so far as in me lies, not to answer blame with blame. 'Why' it was once asked 'do we so freely arrogate to ourselves God's prerogative of blame, and so neglect man's privilege of pity?' It were well for the world if that question were written at the head of every leading article, above the title of every book, across the chair of every public assembly and, better still, in the hearts of men. To apportion blame is a fruitless task, but never more than in times which are calling the humblest to rise to the level of their greatness. The world is in throes which precede creation or death. Our whole race has outgrown the merely national State, and as surely as day follows night or night the day, will pass either to a Commonwealth of nations or else to an empire of slaves. And the issue of these agonies rests with us, in which word I include yourselves. Your own freedom is at stake, the freedom not merely of this Commonwealth, but that of the World. With us it rests to destroy it by our own ignorance and divisions, or else to renew and enlarge it by such unity in counsel and action as profounder knowledge, a fuller understanding of and greater affection for each other alone can bring.

Let us leave this talk of conspiracies and think more of each other and less of ourselves. And this I would urge on my own countrymen, no less than on my fellow citizens in India. With inveterate foes thundering at our gates it is scarcely the time for the

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nations of this Commonwealth to harbour unworthy suspicions of each other. And when peace returns and the time has come to repair its breaches, to widen its walls and extend the freedom they guard within, let us then remember the words in which Parliament from of old has been wont to address the King 'that His Majesty may ever be pleased to put the best construction on all their words and acts.' Now, and also in the time to come, let us deal with each other in the spirit of that prayer.

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APPENDIX A.

Preface from "The Commonwealth of Nations."

In 1910 groups were formed in various centres in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa for studying the nature of citizenship in the British Empire, and the mutual relations of the several communities thereof. In course of time others were constituted in the United Kingdom, India and Newfoundland, and they all came to be known informally as 'Round Table Groups,' from the name of the quarterly review instituted by their members as a medium of mutual information on Imperial affairs.

The task of preparing or editing a comprehensive report on this subject was undertaken by the present writer. Preliminary studies were distributed to the groups for criticism, and their criticisms, when collected, were printed and circulated for their mutual information. On the basis of materials so gathered, the final report was projected in three principal parts. In Part I. it was proposed to deal with the question how and why the British Commonwealth came to exist, to trace the causes which led to its disruption in 1783, and to the establishment of a separate Commonwealth in America. The subsequent growth of the dismembered Commonwealth was to be dealt with in Part II. In Part III. it was proposed to examine the principles upon which, and the means whereby, the members of its widely scattered communities can hope to retain their present status as British citizens in a common state.

Part I. was prepared in five instalments, four of which were completed before the war. Each instalment was printed and circulated to the groups as it was finished. The text was revised in the light of the corrections and criticisms sent in, and at the close of 1914 was reprinted for private circulation under the title of *The Project of a Commonwealth, Part I.*

Meanwhile, in view of the situation created by the war, it was decided to anticipate the completion of the main report by a brief study of that aspect of the subject which most nearly concerns the self-governing Dominions. This short volume has now been published under the title of *The Problem of the Commonwealth.* Part I. of the larger work is now given to the public in order that students may examine the foundations upon which the conclusions adduced in *The Problem of the Commonwealth* are based. To avoid confusion with the smaller volume, the title of the main report has been changed to *The Commonwealth of Nations.*

The Round Table groups were organized for the purpose of study, and men representing every shade of opinion joined them, on the

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understanding that they would not be committed to conclusions of any kind. The only way in which this understanding can be observed in the spirit, as well as in the letter, is for the editor to make himself solely responsible for producing these reports, and for all they contain. They must not be presumed to express the opinions of any Round Table group, or member of such group, other than himself. On the other hand, it must be emphatically stated that the main report is the work of various brains and pens. It is the product not of one writer but of many working in close collaboration. No single brain could master the facts required for an adequate survey of the complicated polity which embraces a quarter of the human race. However, for the reasons given above, the editor must be treated as the sole target of criticism.

For further information with regard to these reports the reader is referred to the preface of *The Problem of the Commonwealth* already published.

L. CURTIS.

April 1916.

APPENDIX B.

From the Round Table Quarterly, September 1916.

The Imperial Dilemma.

I. "The Commonwealth of Nations."

Seven years ago there was begun a private "enquiry into the nature of citizenship in the British Empire, and into the mutual relations of the several communities thereof." The first volume of the results of this enquiry has recently been published under the title of *The Commonwealth of Nations.* It would seem to be desirable, therefore, to give some account of the method by which this book has been prepared, for it is largely because of that method that we wish to commend it to those who are interested in the political problems of the British Empire.

The enquiry has been an attempt to apply the methods of scientific study to politics. It arose in South Africa, as the outcome of the accomplishment of South African Union. The South African had found himself driven to grapple with the problem of Union, because so long as he was a citizen of the Transvaal or Cape Colony only, he found himself impotent to deal with the common affairs of South Africa, by the wise or unwise handling of which he was himself vitally affected. No sooner, however, had he created a South African Parlia-

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ment and become a true South African citizen, than he found himself in a precisely similar difficulty so far as Imperial affairs were concerned. Events, then recent, had proved to him clearly enough that Imperial policy, as being concerned with peace and war, was a matter vitally affecting himself. Yet he had no sort of effective voice in determining that policy, nor did the Imperial constitution as then existing appear to offer any hope of his ever acquiring a voice in determining it. Moreover, a further question was manifest to those who had had experience of the inexorable logic of war. They were citizens of South Africa. They were also citizens of the Empire. If the claims of the two came into conflict how were they to be reconciled, and, if they could not be reconciled, which had first call on their allegiance? In view of the recent "Uitlander" experience, these questions seemed to them not academic in their nature, but of urgent practical importance. To "wait and see" was to give a blank cheque upon their lives and resources to the British Ministry—an indefinite liability, the reality and magnitude of which was certain to be disclosed by the next war. And it might also mean the sudden forcing upon them of a choice between allegiance to South Africa and to the Empire—through the pursuit, for instance, of a policy by the British Government which either ignored South African interests, or was misunderstood in South Africa, because there was no effective constitutional link between the two. It was clear that these problems, in a form equally or even more acute, faced the people of all the other Dominions. It was in order to throw light on these problems, and to ascertain whether they were insoluble, and if not, what were the conditions of their solution, that an organised enquiry was set on foot.

The basis of the enquiry was that its members were agreed upon one thing only—namely, that there was an Imperial problem, and that it was a primary duty of such responsible citizens as could find the time for serious study to endeavour to state the problem and the conditions of its solution, and to make them available for their fellow-countrymen. For that reason the groups of students which came to be known by the name of this Review, and which by degrees spread over the British Isles, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, India, and Egypt, have never been propagandist associations. They have never had an Imperial policy. Their sole purpose has been to conduct an investigation of the Imperial problem on a scale commensurate with its complexity, based upon knowledge of the peculiar conditions and needs of every part of the Empire and representative of all sections of opinion within it. Accordingly they have, wherever possible, included within each group members belonging to all local parties, and holding all shades of Imperialist and anti-Imperialist opinion. There

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has been no secrecy about their proceedings, but neither has publicity been sought. The primary object of enquiry has been to bring to bear upon the greatest of all our political problems the methods of scientific investigation characteristic of a Royal Commission, for the benefit, first, of the members of the groups themselves, and, after them, of the public at large.

The Commonwealth of Nations, of which the first volume is now published, is the result of these researches. This volume is almost entirely the work of the editor, Mr. Lionel Curtis. It represents, in the main, his opinions and experience, and is in no sense an agreed document. It is, too, issued on his authority and commits no one else to the views expressed in it. But as Mr. Curtis says in the preface, "No single brain could master the facts required for an adequate survey of the complicated polity which embraces a quarter of the human race." Thus the report is not the outcome of the investigations of a single man, but of the constructive criticism of one man's work by many hundreds of minds in all parts of the Empire.

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